THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

VOL. VII.

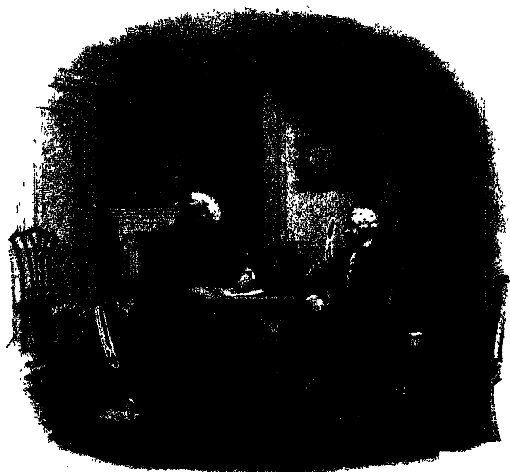


BOSWELL'S LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.

VOL. VII.



LONDON.
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1835

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SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

INCLUDING

A JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES,

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

NEW EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND NOTES,

BY

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER, M.P.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUMES OF JOHNSONIANA,

BY HAWKINS, PIOZZI, MURPHY, TYERS, REYNOLDS,
MALONE, NICHOLS, STEEVENS, CUMBERLAND,
AND OTHERS

AND NOTES BY VARIOUS HANDS.

ALSO, UPWARDS OF

FIFTY ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS.

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THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

1777 — 1778.

Ashbourne. — Personal Disputes. — Duke of Devonshire. — Burke's Definition of a Free Government. — Ilam. — The Christian Revelation. — Mungo Campbell. — Dr. Taylor's Bull-dog. — "Æsop at play." — Memory. — Rochester's Poems. — Prior. — Hypochondria. — Books. — Homer and Virgil. — Lord Bacon. — Topham Beauclerk. — Grainger's "Ode on Solitude." — Music. — Happiness. — Future State. — Slave Trade. — American Independence. — Corruption of Parliament. — Planting. — "Oddity Johnson." — Decision of the Negro Cause. — Mr. Saunders Welch. — Advice to Travellers. — Correspondence.

On Monday, September 22., when at breakfast, I unguardedly said to Dr. Johnson, "I wish I saw you and Mrs. Macaulay together." He grew very angry; and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out, "No, Sir; you would not see us quarrel, to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *pit* two people against

Then, checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added, "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this; but it *is* very uncivil." Dr. Taylor thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it; but I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson that I was to blame, for I candidly owned, that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mrs. Macaulay and him; but then I knew how the contest would end; so that I was to see him triumph. JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end; and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of —— (1) (naming one of our friends), endeavouring to introduce a subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ." BOSWELL. "But he told me, Sir, he does it for instruction." JOHNSON. "Whatever the motive be, Sir, the man who does so, does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel, that he may learn how to defend himself."

He found great fault with a gentleman of our

(1) Mr. Langton is, no doubt, meant here, and in the next paragraph. See the affair of the 7th May, 1773 (Vol. III. p. 205., and Vol. IV. p. 90.); where the reader will find the cause of Johnson's frequent and fretful recurrence to this complaint. — C.

acquaintance for keeping a bad table. "Sir," said he, "when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs. Thrale, who has no card-parties at her house, to give sweetmeats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for every body loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation." Such was his attention to the *minutiæ* of life and manners.

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire (1), grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family: "He was not a man of superior abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse: he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word; so high as to the point of honour." This was a liberal testimony from the Tory Johnson to the virtue of a great Whig nobleman.

Mr. Burke's "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the Affairs of America," being mentioned, Johnson censured the composition much, and he ridiculed the definition of a free government; *viz.*, "For any practical purpose, it is what the people thinks so." "I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions," said he, "for it is to be governed just as I please." And when Dr. Taylor talked of a girl being sent to a parish workhouse, and asked how

(1) William, third Duke of Devonshire, who died in 1758.—L.

much she could be obliged to work, "Why," said Johnson, "as much as is reasonable; and what is that? as much as *she thinks* reasonable."

Dr. Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Ilam, a romantic scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves.[1] I suppose it is well described in some of the tours. Johnson described it distinctly and vividly, at which I could not but express to him my wonder; because, though my eyes, as he observed, were better than his, I could not by any means equal him in representing visible objects. I said, the difference between us in this respect was as that between a man who has a bad instrument, but plays well on it, and a man who has a good instrument, on which he can play very imperfectly.

I recollect a very fine amphitheatre, surrounded with hills covered with woods, and walks neatly formed along the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, overshadowed with trees; in one of which recesses, we were told, Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Ilam; two rivers bursting near each other from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having run for many miles under ground. Plott, in his "History of Staffordshire" (p. 69.),

(1) This is a mistake. The *Ports* had been seated at Ilam time out of mind. Congreve had visited that family at Ilam; and *his seat*, that is, *the bench* on which he sometimes sat, in the gardens, used to be shown: this, Mr. Bernard Port — one of the ancient family, and now vicar of Ilam — thinks was the cause of Mr. Boswell's error. — C.

gives an account of this curiosity; but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said he had put in corks[1] where the river *Manyfold* sinks into the ground, and had catched them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out. Indeed, such subterraneous courses of water are found in various parts of our globe.[2]

Talking of Dr. Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, I ventured to say, "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, that 'It is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen.'" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right.[3] But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought."

He repeated his observation, that the differences among Christians are really of no consequence. "For instance," said he, "if a Protestant objects to

(1) The gardener at Ilam told me that it was Johnson himself who had made this experiment; but there is not the least doubt of the fact. The river sinks suddenly into the earth behind a hill above the valley, and bursts out again in the same direction, and with the same body of water, about four miles below. — C.

(2) See Plott's "History of Staffordshire," p. 88.

(3) This is not quite true. It is, indeed, more probable that one or two interested witnesses should lie, than that a miracle should have happened; but that distant and unconnected witnesses and circumstances should undesignedly concur in evidencing a falsehood, — and that falsehood one in itself unnatural, — would be more miraculous than any miracle in Scripture; and thus by Hume's own argument the balance of probability is in favour of the miracles. — C.

a Papist, 'You worship images;' the Papist can answer, 'I do not insist on your doing it; you may be a very good Papist without it; I do it only as a help to my devotion.'" I said, the great article of Christianity is the revelation of immortality. (1) Johnson admitted it was.

In the evening, a gentleman farmer, who was on a visit at Dr. Taylor's, attempted to dispute with Johnson in favour of Mungo Campbell (2), who shot Alexander, Earl of Eglintoune, upon his having fallen, when retreating from his lordship, who he believed was about to seize his gun, as he had threatened to do. He said he should have done just as Campbell did. JOHNSON. "Whoever would do as Campbell did, deserves to be hanged; not that I could, as a juryman, have found him legally guilty of murder; but I am glad they found means to convict him." The gentleman farmer said, "A poor man has as much honour as a rich man; and Camp-

(1) This is loosely expressed. The *ancients* believed in immortality, and even a state of retribution. One sect, at least, of the Jews, as well as the Mahomedans, acknowledge a future state. On so vital a question it is not safe to rest on Mr. Boswell's colloquial phrases, which have some importance when they appear to be sanctioned by the *admission* of Dr. Johnson. Immortality is, indeed, assured, and a thousand social blessings and benefits are vouchsafed to us by the Christian revelation; but "the great article of Christianity" is surely the ATONEMENT! — C.

(2) Campbell terminated his own life in prison. It is hardly to be believed (though there was every such appearance), that the government could have permitted him to be executed; for Lord Eglintoune was grossly the aggressor, and Campbell fired (whether accidentally or designedly) when in the act of falling, as he *retreated from* Lord Eglintoune. Lord Eglintoune was a friend of Mr. Boswell's, and the son of the lady who treated Johnson with such flattering attention. — See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 121. — C.

but who had *that* to defend." Johnson exclaimed, "A poor man has no honour." The English yeoman, not dismayed, proceeded: "Lord Eglintoune was a damned fool to run on upon Campbell, after being warned that Campbell would shoot him if he did." Johnson, who could not bear any thing like swearing, angrily replied, "He was *not* a *damned* fool: he only thought too well of Campbell. He did not believe Campbell would be such a *damned* scoundrel, as to do so *damned* a thing." His emphasis on *damned*, accompanied with frowning looks, reproved his opponent's want of decorum in *his* presence.

Talking of the danger of being mortified by rejection, when making approaches to the acquaintance of the great, I observed, "I am, however, generally for trying, 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'" Johnson. "Very true, Sir; but I have always been more afraid of failing, than hopeful of success." And, indeed, though he had all just respect for rank, no man ever less courted the favour of the great.

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson seemed to be more uniformly social, cheerful, and alert, than I had almost ever seen him. He was prompt on great occasions and on small. Taylor, who praised every thing of his own to excess, in short, "whose geese were all swans," as the proverb says, expatiated on the excellence of his bull-dog, which he told us was "perfectly well shaped." Johnson, after examining the animal attentively, thus repressed the vain-glory of our host: —"No, Sir, he is *not* well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part, to the *tenuity* —

the thin part — behind, which a bull-dog ought to have." This *tenuity* was the only *hard word* that I heard him use during this interview, and it will be observed, he instantly put another expression in its place. Taylor said, a small bull-dog was as good as a large one. JOHNSON. "No, Sir: for, in proportion to his size, he has strength: and your argument would prove, that a good bull-dog may be as small as a mouse." It was amazing how he entered with perspicuity and keenness upon every thing that occurred in conversation. Most men, whom I know, would no more think of discussing a question about a bull-dog, than of attacking a bull.

I cannot allow any fragment whatever that floats in my memory concerning the great subject of this work to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others; while every little spark adds something to the general blaze: and to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity. Showers of them have been discharged at my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides;" yet it still sails unhurt along the stream of time, and as an attendant upon Johnson,

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and "pored" for some time with placid indolence upon an artificial waterfall, which Dr. Taylor had made by building a

strong dyke of stone across the river behind the garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish, which had come down the river, and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a desire to see it play more freely, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate at times the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on a bank, and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with a humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath; and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts, "Come," said he (throwing down the pole), "*you* shall take it now;" which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record; but it is a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend, and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars. And let it be remembered, that "Æsop at play" is one of the instructive apologues of antiquity.

I mentioned an old gentleman of our acquaintance whose memory was beginning to fail. JOHNSON. "There must be a diseased mind where there is a failure of memory at seventy. A man's head, Sir, must be morbid if he fails so soon." (1) My friend,

(1) Probably Boswell's father, Lord Auchinleck, was meant; but this is one of those violent and absurd assertions into

being now himself sixty-eight, might think thus: but I imagine, that *threescore and ten*, the Psalmist's period of sound human life in later ages, may have a failure, though there be no disease in the constitution.

Talking of Rochester's Poems, he said he had given them to Mr. Steevens to castrate (1) for the edition of the poets, to which he was to write prefaces. Dr. Taylor (the only time I ever heard him say any thing witty) (2) observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself, his exceptionable poems would not have been written." I asked if Burnet had not given a good life of Rochester. JOHNSON. "We have a good *Death*; there is not much *Life*." I asked whether Prior's poems were to be printed entire: Johnson said they were. I mentioned Lord Hailes's censure of Prior, in his preface to a collection of "Sacred Poems," by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions "those impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious author." JOHNSON. "Sir, Lord Hailes has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hailes thinks there is,

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which Johnson was so often betrayed by his private feelings and prejudices. the Psalmist says, and successive ages have proved, that the years of man are threescore years and ten; yet, because Johnson was now near seventy, he ventures to assert that *any* decay of the faculties at that age must be morbid. — C.

(1) This was unnecessary, for it had been done in the early part of the present century by Jacob Tonson. — M.

(2) I am told that Horace, Earl of Orford, has a collection of *Bon-Mots* by persons who never said but one. — B. — I see *coarseness* here, but no *wit*. — C.

he must be more combustible than other people." I instanced the tale of "Paulo Purganti and his wife." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is nothing there, but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, Sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library."

The hypochondriac disorder being mentioned, Dr. Johnson did not think it so common as I supposed. "Dr. Taylor," said he, "is the same one day as another. Burke and Reynolds are the same. Beauclerk, except when in pain, is the same. I am not so myself; but this I do not mention commonly."

I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views of any thing. It was most comfortable to me to experience in Dr. Johnson's company a relief from this uneasiness. His steady, vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently presented in such a wavering state, that my reason could not judge well of them.

Dr. Johnson advised me to-day to have as many books about me as I could; that I might read upon any subject upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time. "What you read *then*," said he, "you will remember; but if you have not a book immediately ready, and the subject moulds in your mind, it is a chance if you have again a desire to study it." He added, "If a man never has an eager desire for instruction, he should prescribe a

task for himself. But it is better when a man reads from immediate inclination."

He repeated a good many lines of Horace's Odes while we were in the chaise; I remember particularly the Ode "*Eheu fugaces*."

He said, the dispute as to the comparative excellence of Homer or Virgil (1) was inaccurate. "We must consider," said he, "whether Homer was not the greatest poet, though Virgil may have produced the finest poem.(2) Virgil was indebted to Homer for the whole invention of the structure of an epic poem, and for many of his beauties."

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite author with him; but he had never read his works till he was compiling the English Dictionary, in which he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted. Mr. Seward recollects his having mentioned, that a dictionary of the English language might be compiled from Bacon's writings alone, and that he had once an intention of giving an edition of Bacon, at least of his English works, and writing the life of that great man. Had he executed this intention, there can be no doubt that he would have done it in a most masterly manner. Mallet's Life of Bacon has no inconsiderable merit as an acute and elegant dis-

(1) I am informed by Mr. Langton, that a great many years ago he was present when this question was agitated between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke; and, to use Johnson's phrase, they "talked their best;" Johnson for Homer, Burke for Virgil. It may well be supposed to have been one of the ablest and most brilliant contests that ever was exhibited. How much must we regret that it has not been preserved!

(2) But where is the *inaccuracy*, if the admirers of Homer contend, that he was not only prior to Virgil in point of time, but superior in excellence? — J. Boswell, jun.

sertation relative to its subject; but Mallet's mind was not comprehensive enough to embrace the vast extent of Lord Verulam's genius and research. Dr. Warburton therefore observed, with witty justness, "that Mallet in his Life of Bacon had forgotten that he was a philosopher; and if he should write the Life of the Duke of Marlborough, which he had undertaken to do, he would probably forget that he was a general."

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage, I mentioned it to him in direct terms; and it was to this effect:—that a gentleman (1) who had lived in great intimacy with him, shown him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging-house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking; upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation: "What, Sir!" said she, "are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress; you who have been so much obliged to him?" And that Johnson answered, "Madam, I owe him no

(1) It appears from part of the original journal in Mr. Anderdon's papers, that the friend who told the story was Mr. Beauclerk, and the gentleman and lady alluded to were Mr. (probably Henry) and Miss Harvey. There is reason to fear that Boswell's indiscretion in betraying Mr. Beauclerk's name impaired the cordiality between him and Dr. Johnson. — C. — 1835.

obligation; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false; but, like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus:—"Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much; yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did say so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle, but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend: but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."

On Tuesday, September 23., Johnson was remarkably cordial to me. It being necessary for me to return to Scotland soon, I had fixed on the

next day for my setting out, and I felt a tender concern at the thought of parting with him. He had, at this time, frankly communicated to me many particulars, which are inserted in this work in their proper places; and once, when I happened to mention that the expense of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said, "Why, Sir, if the expense were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it; but, if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson and I frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides; for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind.

He found fault with me for using the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see," said he, "the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to *coin* it; you should say *get* money." The phrase, however, is, I think, pretty current. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms; such as *pledging myself* for *undertaking*; *line* for *department* or *branch*, as the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea*, in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building; but we cannot

surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration;" and the first speakers in parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member;" or "reprobating an *idea* as unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

I perceived that he pronounced the word *heard*, as if spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of sounding it *herd*, as is most usually done.[1] He said, his reason was, that if it were pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

He praised Granger's "Ode on Solitude," in Dodsley's collection, and repeated, with great energy, the exordium:—

"O Solitude, romantic maid!
Whether by nodding towers you tread;
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb;
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
Or by the Nile's coy source abide:

(1) In the age of Queen Elizabeth this word was frequently written, as doubtless it was pronounced, *hard*. — M. — I consider the pronunciation of this word, which Boswell justly makes an objection to, as provincial; but I think he must have misapprehended Dr. Johnson's "reason." There are many words, in which these three letters occur, that are pronounced similarly, e.g. *earn*, *learn*, &c.; nor would the single exception be an objection, as uniformity is not the *jus et norma loquendi* in English. — Hall.

> Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,
> From Hecla view the thawing deep:
> Or, at the purple dawn of day,
> Tadmor's marble waste survey."

observing, "This, Sir, is very noble."

In the evening our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have "Let Ambition fire thy Mind" played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of music. I told him that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. "Sir," said he, "I should never hear of it, if it made me such a fool."

Much of the effect of music, I am satisfied, is owing to the association of ideas. That air, which instantly and irresistibly excites in the Swiss, when in a foreign land, the *maladie du païs*(1), has, I am told, no intrinsic power of sound. And I know from my own experience, that Scotch reels, though brisk, make me melancholy, because I used to hear them in my early years, at a time when Mr. Pitt

(1) [The *Ranz des Vaches* — "an air," says Rousseau, "so dear to the Swiss, that it was forbidden, under the pain of death, to play it to the troops, as it immediately drew tears from them, and made them who heard it desert, or die of what is called the *maladie du païs*, so ardent a desire did it excite to return to their country. It is in vain to seek in this air for energetic accents capable of producing such astonishing effects, for which strangers are unable to account from the music, which is in itself uncouth and wild."]

called for soldiers, "from the mountains of the north," and numbers of brave Highlanders were going abroad, never to return. Whereas the airs in "The Beggar's Opera," many of which are very soft, never fail to render me gay, because they are associated with the warm sensations and high spirits of London. This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear Sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it: write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his "Vanity of Human Wishes." (1) Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness; grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of public amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir, these are only struggles for happiness. When I

(1) ["Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee."]

first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual there would be distressing when alone." This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of languor (1), which succeeds the animation of gaiety, is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success; or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose; but my conclusion is in general but too true."

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr. Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour in a serene autumn night, looking up to

(1) Pope mentions,

"Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair"

But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in "Virtue, an Ethic Epistle," a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758; who, treating of pleasure in excess, says,

"Till languor, suffering on the rack of bliss,
Confess that man was never made for this."

the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame of mind. "Sir," said he, "I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually." I ventured to ask him whether, although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security; nay, we know that some of them have fallen. It may therefore, perhaps, be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

After supper I accompanied him to his apartment, and at my request he dictated to me an argument in favour of the negro who was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the court of session in Scotland. He had always been very zealous

against slavery in every form, in which I with all deference thought that he discovered "a zeal without knowledge." Upon one occasion, when in company with some very grave men at Oxford, his toast was, "Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies." His violent prejudice against our West Indian and American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity. Towards the conclusion of his "Taxation no Tyranny," he says, "How is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" and in his conversation with Mr. Wilkes he asked, "Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?" (1) That Trecothick could both speak and write good English is well known. I myself was favoured with his correspondence concerning the brave Corsicans. And that Beckford could speak it with a spirit of honest resolution even to his majesty, as his "faithful lord mayor of London," is commemorated by the noble monument erected to him in Guildhall.

The Argument dictated by Dr. Johnson was as follows:—

"It must be agreed that in most ages many countries have had part of their inhabitants in a state of slavery; yet it may doubted whether slavery can ever be supposed the natural condition of man. It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal; and very difficult to imagine how one would be subjected to another but by violent compulsion. An individual may, indeed, forfeit his liberty by a crime; but he cannot by that crime forfeit the liberty of his

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 196.—C.

children. What is true of a criminal seems true likewise of a captive. A man may accept life from a conquering enemy on condition of perpetual servitude; but it is very doubtful whether he can entail that servitude on his descendants; for no man can stipulate without commission for another. The condition which he himself accepts, his son or grandson would have rejected. If we should admit, what perhaps may with more reason be denied, that there are certain relations between man and man which may make slavery necessary and just, yet it can never be proved that he who is now suing for his freedom ever stood in any of those relations. He is certainly subject by no law, but that of violence, to his present master; who pretends no claim to his obedience, but that he bought him from a merchant of slaves, whose right to sell him never was examined. It is said, that according to the constitutions of Jamaica he was legally enslaved; these constitutions are merely positive; and apparently injurious to the rights of mankind, because whoever is exposed to sale is condemned to slavery without appeal, by whatever fraud or violence he might have been originally brought into the merchant's power. In our own time princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were intrusted, that they might have an European education; but when once they were brought to a market in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs. The laws of Jamaica afford a negro no redress. His colour is considered as a sufficient testimony against him. It is to be lamented that moral right should ever give way to political convenience. But if temptations of interest are sometimes too strong for human virtue, let us at least retain a virtue where there is no temptation to quit it. In the present case there is apparent right on one side, and no convenience on the other. Inhabitants of this island can neither gain riches nor power by taking away the liberty of any part of the human species. The sum of the argument

is this:—No man is by nature the property of another. The defendant is, therefore, by nature free. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away. That the defendant has, by any act, forfeited the rights of nature, we require to be proved; and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free."

I record Dr. Johnson's argument fairly upon this particular case; where, perhaps, he was in the right. But I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest against his general doctrine with respect to the slave trade. For I will resolutely say, that his unfavourable notion of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our legislature, to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, must have been crushed at once, had not the insignificance of the zealots who vainly took the lead in it made the vast body of planters, merchants, and others, whose immense properties are involved in that trade, reasonably enough suppose that there could be no danger. The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation; and though some men of superior abilities have supported it, whether from a love of temporary popularity when prosperous, or a love of general mischief when desperate, my opinion is unshaken. To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would

be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life; especially now when their passage to the West Indies and their treatment there is humanely regulated. To abolish that trade would be to

> "—— shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

Whatever may have passed elsewhere concerning it, the House of Lords is wise and independent:

> "Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
> Nec sumit aut ponit secures
> Arbitrio popularis auræ." (1)

I have read, conversed, and thought much upon the subject, and would recommend to all who are capable of conviction an excellent tract by my learned and ingenious friend, John Ranby, Esq., entitled "Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade." To Mr. Ranby's "Doubts," I will apply Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's expression in praise of a Scotch law book, called* "Dirleton's Doubts;" "HIS *doubts*," said his lordship, "are better than most people's *certainties*."

When I said now to Johnson, that I was afraid I kept him too late up, "No, Sir," said he, "I don't care though I sit all night with you." This was an animated speech from a man in his sixty-ninth year. (2)

(1) ["Undisappointed in designs,
With native honours Virtue shines;
Nor takes up power, nor lays it down,
As giddy rabbles smile or frown."—[illegible]]

(2) Dr. Johnson loved late hours extremely, or more properly hated early ones. Nothing was more terrifying to him

Had I been as attentive not to displease him as I ought to have been, I know not but this vigil might have been fulfilled; but I unluckily entered upon the controversy concerning the right of Great Britain to tax America, and attempted to argue in favour of our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. I insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives, without whose consent money could not be exacted from them. Johnson could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce; and the violent agitation into which he was thrown, while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me

than the idea of retiring to bed, which he never would call going to rest, or suffer another to call so. "I lie down," said he, "that my acquaintance may sleep; but I lie down to endure oppressive misery, and soon rise again to pass the night in anxiety and pain." By this pathetic manner, which no one ever possessed in so eminent a degree, he used to shock me from quitting his company, till I hurt my own health not a little by sitting up with him when I was myself far from well: nor was it an easy matter to oblige him even by compliance, for he always maintained that no one forbore their own gratifications for the sake of pleasing another, and if one *did* sit up it was probably to amuse one's self. Some right, however, he certainly had to say so, as he made his company exceedingly entertaining when he had once forced one, by his vehement lamentations and piercing reproofs, not to quit the room, but to sit quietly and make tea for him, as I often did in London till four o'clock in the morning. At Streatham I managed better, having always some friend who was kind enough to engage him in talk, and favour my retreat. — PIOZZI.

so, that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject. I myself, however, grew warm, and the change was great, from the calm state of philosophical discussion in which we had a little before been pleasingly employed.

I talked of the corruption of the British parliament, in which I alleged that any question, however unreasonable or unjust, might be carried by a venal majority; and I spoke with high admiration of the Roman senate, as if composed of men sincerely desirous to resolve what they should think best for their country. My friend would allow no such character to the Roman senate; and he maintained that the British parliament was not corrupt, and that there was no occasion to corrupt its members; asserting, that there was hardly ever any question of great importance before parliament, any question in which a man might not very well vote either upon one side or the other. He said there had been none in his time except that respecting America.

We were fatigued by the contest, which was produced by my want of caution; and he was not then in the humour to slide into easy and cheerful talk. It therefore so happened, that we wefe after an hour or two very willing to separate and go to bed.

On Wednesday, September 24., I went into Dr. Johnson's room before he got up, and finding that the storm of the preceding night was quite laid, I sat down upon his bedside, and he talked with as much readiness and good humour as ever. He recommended to me to plant a considerable part of a

large moorish farm which I had purchased; and he made several calculations of the expense and profit; for he delighted in exercising his mind on the science of numbers. He pressed upon me the importance of planting at the first in a very sufficient manner, quoting the saying, "*In bello non licet bis errare*:" and adding, "this is equally true in planting."

I spoke with gratitude of Dr. Taylor's hospitality; and as evidence that it was not on account of his good table alone that Johnson visited him often, I mentioned a little anecdote which had escaped my friend's recollection, and at hearing which repeated, he smiled. One evening, when I was sitting with him, Frank delivered this message: "Sir, Dr. Taylor sends his compliments to you, and begs you will dine with him to-morrow. He has got a hare." My compliments," said Johnson, "and I'll dine with him — hare or rabbit."

After breakfast I departed, and pursued my journey northwards.(1) I took my post-chaise from the

(1) "Ashbourne, Sept. 25. 1777. Boswell is gone, and is, I hope, pleased that he has been here; though to look on any thing with pleasure is not very common. He has been gay and good-humoured in his usual way, but we have not agreed upon any other expedition.

"September 29. He says, his wife does not love me quite well yet, though we have made a formal peace. He kept his journal very diligently; but then what was there to journalise? I should be glad to see what he says of [Taylor]."

"Oct. 13. — I cannot but think on your kindness and my *master's*. Life has, upon the whole, fallen short, very short, of my early expectation; but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight. — I am not very apt to be delighted."

Green Man, a very good inn at Ashbourne, the mistress of which, a mighty civil gentlewoman, courtsying very low, presented me with an engraving of the sign of her house; to which she had subjoined, in her own hand-writing, an address in such singular simplicity of style, that I have preserved it pasted upon one of the boards of my original Journal at this time, and shall here insert it for the amusement of my readers: —

"M. Killingley's duty waits upon Mr. Boswell, is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour; whenever he comes this way, hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr. Boswell name the house to his extensive ac-

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"Lichfield, Oct. 22. — I am come, at last, to Lichfield, and am really glad that I have got away from a place where there was indeed no evil, but very little good. My visit to Stowhill has been paid. I have seen there a collection of misery. Mrs. Aston paralytic, Mrs. Walmsley lame, Mrs. Hervey blind, and I think another lady deaf. Even such is life. I hope dear Mrs. Aston is a little better, it is, however, very little. She was, I believe, glad to see me, and to have any body glad to see me is a great pleasure." *

"Lichfield, Oct. 29. — Though after my last letter I might justly claim an interval of rest, yet I write again to tell you, that for this turn you will hear but once more from Lichfield. This day is Wednesday — on Saturday I shall write again, and on Monday I shall set out to seek adventures; for you know,— 'None but the brave desert the fair.' On Monday we hope to see Birmingham, the seat of the mechanic arts; and I know not whether our next stage will be Oxford, the mansion of the liberal arts; or London, the residence of all the arts together. The chymists call the world *Academia Paracelsi*, my ambition is to be his fellow-student — to see the works of nature, and hear the lectures of truth. To London, therefore! London may, perhaps, fill me; and I hope to fill my part of London." — *Letters to Mrs. Thrale.*

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* "Mr Johnson sends his compliments to the ladies at Stowhill, of whom he would have taken a more formal leave, but that he was willing to spare a ceremony which he hopes would have been no pleasure to them, and would have been painful to himself."

quaintance, it would be a singular favour conferred on one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks, and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time, and in a blessed eternity."

"Tuesday morning."

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store. I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes, in whom I have always placed deserved confidence; and what he wrote to me concerning it is so much to my credit as the biographer of Johnson, that my readers will, I hope, grant me their indulgence for here inserting it: "It is not once or twice going over it," says Sir William, "that will satisfy me; for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertainment; and I derive more benefit from Dr. Johnson's admirable discussions than I should be able to draw from his personal conversation; for I suppose there is not a man in the world to whom he discloses his sentiments so freely as to yourself."

I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor-inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone a considerable way out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name, I think, was Malton. He happened to mention that "the celebrated Dr. Johnson had been in his house." I inquired *who* this Dr. Johnson was, that I might hear my host's notion of him. "Sir," said he, "Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England; he

writes for the ministry; he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what's going on."

My friend, who had a thorough dependence upon the authenticity of my relation without any *embellishment*, as *falsehood* or *fiction* is too gently called, laughed a good deal at this representation of himself.

LETTER 303. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

Edinburgh, Sept. 29. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR, — By the first post I inform you of my safe arrival at my own house, and that I had the comfort of finding my wife and children all in good health.

"When I look back upon our late interview, it appears to me to have answered expectation better than almost any scheme of happiness that I ever put in execution. My Journal is stored with wisdom and wit; and my memory is filled with the recollection of lively and affectionate feelings, which now, I think, yield me more satisfaction than at the time when they were first excited. I have experienced this upon other occasions. I shall be obliged to you if you will explain it to me; for it seems wonderful that pleasure should be more vivid at a distance than when near. I wish you may find yourself in a humour to do me this favour; but I flatter myself with no strong hope of it; for I have observed, that, unless upon very serious occasions, your letters to me are not *answers* to those which I write." (I then expressed much uneasiness that I had mentioned to him the name of the gentleman [1] who had told me the story so much to his disadvantage, the truth of which he had completely refuted; for that my having done so might be interpreted as a breach of confidence, and

(1) Mr. Beauclerk. See *antè*, p. 13. — C.

offend one whose society I valued: therefore earnestly requesting that no notice might be taken of it to any body, till I should be in London, and have an opportunity to talk it over with the gentleman.)

LETTER 304. TO MRS. ASTON.

"London, Nov. 20. 1777.

"DEAR MADAM, — Through Birmingham and Oxford I got without any difficulty or disaster to London, though not in so short a time as I expected, for I did not reach Oxford before the second day. I came home very much incommoded by obstructed respiration; but by vigorous methods am something better. I have since been at Brighthelmstone, and am now designing to settle.

"Different things, Madam, are fit for different people. It is fit for me to settle, and for you to move. I wish I could hear of you at Bath; but I am afraid that is hardly to be expected from your resolute inactivity. My next hope is that you will endeavour to grow well where you are. I cannot help thinking that I saw a visible amendment between the time when I left you to go to Ashbourne, and the time when I came back. I hope you will go on mending and mending, to which exercise and cheerfulness will very much contribute. Take care, therefore, dearest Madam, to be busy and cheerful.

"I have great confidence in the care and conversation of dear Mrs. Gastrell. It is very much the interest of all that know her that she should continue well, for she is one of few people that has the proper regard for those that are sick. She was so kind to me that I hope I never shall forget it; and if it be troublesome to you to write, I shall hope that she will do me another act of kindness by answering this letter, for I beg that I may hear from you by some hand or another. I am, Madam, your, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 305. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"London, Nov. 20. 1777.

"DEAR LOVE, — You ordered me to write you word when I came home. I have been for some days at Brighthelmstone, and came back on Tuesday night.

"You know that when I left you I was not well: I have taken physic very diligently, and am perceptibly better; so much better that I hope by care and perseverance to recover, and see you again from time to time.

"Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, has had my direction to send you a cast of my head. I will pay the carriage when we meet. Let me know how you like it; and what the ladies of your rout say to it. I have heard different opinions. I cannot think where you can put it.

"I found every body here well. Miss [Thrale] has a mind to be womanly, and her womanhood does not sit well upon her. Please to make my compliments to all the ladies and all the gentlemen to whom I owe them, that is, to a great part of the town. I am, dear Madam your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 306. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Nov. 29. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — You will wonder, or you have wondered, why no letter has come from me. What you wrote at your return had in it such a strain of cowardly caution as gave me no pleasure. I could not well do what you wished; I had no need to vex you with a refusal. I have seen [Mr. Beauclerk], and as to him have set all right, without any inconvenience, so far as I know, to you. Mrs. Thrale had forgot the story. You may now be at ease.

"And at ease I certainly wish you, for the kindness that you showed in coming so long a journey to see me. It was pity to keep you so long in pain, but, upon reviewing the matter, I do not see what I could have done better than I did. I hope you found at your return my dear enemy and all her little people quite well, and had no reason to repent of your journey. I think on it with great gratitude.

"I was not well when you left me at the doctor's, and I grew worse; yet I staid on, and at Lichfield was very ill. Travelling, however, did not make me worse; and when I came to London, I complied with a summons to go to Brighthelmstone, where I saw Beauclerk, and staid three days.

"Our club has recommenced last Friday, but I was not there. Langton has another wench. (1) Mrs. Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer. They got by their trade last year a very large sum, and their expenses are proportionate. Mrs. Williams's health is very bad. And I have had for some time a very difficult and laborious respiration; but I am better by purges, abstinence, and other methods. I am yet, however, much behind-hand in my health and rest.

"Dr. Blair's sermons are now universally commended; but let him think that I had the honour of first finding and first praising his excellencies. I did not stay to add my voice to that of the public.

"My dear friend, let me thank you once more for your visit: you did me great honour, and I hope met with nothing that displeased you. I staid long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing. I then went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stowhill [Mrs. Aston] very dangerously diseased. Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.

(1) A daughter born to him.

"Well, now, I hope all is well; write as soon as you can to, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 307. FROM MR. BOSWELL

"Edinburgh, Nov. 29. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR, — This day's post has at length relieved me from much uneasiness, by bringing me a letter from you. I was, indeed, doubly uneasy; on my own account and yours. I was very anxious to be secured against any bad consequences from my imprudence in mentioning the gentleman's name who had told me a story to your disadvantage; and as I could hardly suppose it possible that you would delay so long to make me easy, unless you were ill, I was not a little apprehensive about you. You must not be offended when I venture to tell you that you appear to me to have been too rigid upon this occasion. The '*cowardly caution which gave you no pleasure*,' was suggested to me by a friend here, to whom I mentioned the strange story, and the detection of its falsity, as an instance how one may be deceived by what is apparently very good authority. But, as I am still persuaded, that as I might have obtained the truth without mentioning the gentleman's name, it was wrong in me to do it, I cannot see that you are just in blaming my caution. But if you were ever so just in your disapprobation, might you not have dealt more tenderly with me?

"I went to Auchinleck about the middle of October, and passed some time with my father very comfortably.

"I am engaged in a criminal prosecution against a country schoolmaster, for indecent behaviour to his female scholars. There is no statute against such abominable conduct; but it is punishable at common law. I shall be obliged to you for your assistance in this extraordinary trial. I ever am, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

About this time I wrote to Johnson, giving him an account of the decision of the Negro cause, by the court of session, which by those who hold even the mildest and best regulated slavery in abomination (of which number I do not hesitate to declare that I am none) should be remembered with high respect, and to the credit of Scotland; for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of *Somerset*, which was decided in England(1); being truly the general question, whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master in any mode should be sanctified by the law of a free country. A negro, then called *Joseph Knight*, a native of Africa, having been brought to Jamaica in the usual course of the slave trade, and purchased by a Scotch gentleman in that island, had attended his master to Scotland, where it was officiously suggested to him that he would be found entitled to his liberty without any limitation. He accordingly brought his action, in the course of which the advocates on both sides did themselves great honour. Mr. Maclaurin has had the praise of Johnson, for his argument (2) in favour of the negro, and Mr. Macconochie (3)

(1) See State Trials, vol. xi. p. 339, and Mr. Hargrave's argument.

(2) The motto to it was happily chosen: —

"Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses."

I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance no less strange than true, that a brother advocate in considerable practice [Mr. Wright], but of whom it certainly cannot be said, *Ingenuas didicit fideliter artes*, asked Mr. Maclaurin, with a face of flippant assurance, "Are these words your own?"

(3) Afterwards a lord of session, by the title of Lord Meadowbank, and father of the present Lord Meadowbank. — C.

distinguished himself on the same side, by his ingenuity and extraordinary research. Mr. Cullen, on the part of the master, discovered good information and sound reasoning; in which he was well supported by Mr. James Ferguson, remarkable for a manly understanding, and a knowledge both of books and of the world. But I cannot too highly praise the speech which Mr. Henry Dundas (1) generously contributed to the cause of the sooty stranger. Mr. Dundas's Scottish accent, which has been so often in vain obtruded as an objection to his powerful abilities in parliament, was no disadvantage to him in his own country. And I do declare, that upon this memorable question he impressed me, and I believe all his audience, with such feelings as were produced by some of the most eminent orations of antiquity. This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend, with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topics: yet I persuade myself without malice. A great majority of the lords of session decided for the negro. But four of their number, the Lord President [Dundas], Lord Elliock [Veitch], Lord Monboddo [Burnett], and Lord Covington [Lockhart], resolutely maintained the lawfulness of a *status*, which has been acknowledged in all ages and countries, and that when freedom flourished, as in old Greece and Rome.

(1) [Afterwards Viscount Melville.]

LETTER 308. TO MRS. GASTREL. (1)

"Bolt Court, Dec. 23. 1777.

"DEAR MADAM, — Your long silence portended no good; yet I hope the danger is not so near as our anxiety sometimes makes us fear. Winter is indeed to all those that any distemper has enfeebled a very troublesome time; but care and caution may pass safely through it, and from spring and summer some relief is always to be hoped. When I came hither I fell to taking care of myself, and by physic and opium had the constriction that obstructed my breath very suddenly removed. My nights still continue very laborious and tedious, but they do not grow worse.

"I do not ask you, dear madam, to take care of Mrs. Aston; I know how little you want any such exhortations; but I earnestly entreat her to take care of herself. Many lives are prolonged by a diligent attention to little things, and I am far from thinking it unlikely that she may grow better by degrees. However, it is her duty to try, and when we do our duty we have reason to hope. I am, dear Madam, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 309. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 27. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — This is the time of the year in which all express their good wishes to their friends, and I send mine to you and your family. May your lives be long, happy, and good. I have been much out of order, but, I hope, do not grow worse.

"The crime of the schoolmaster whom you are engaged to prosecute is very great, and may be suspected to be too common. In our law it would be a breach of

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 105. — C.

the peace and a misdemeanour: that is, a kind of indefinite crime, not capital, but punishable at the discretion of the court. You cannot want matter: all that needs to be said will easily occur.

"Mr. Shaw, the author of the Gaelic Grammar, desires me to make a request for him to Lord Eglintoune, that he may be appointed chaplain to one of the new-raised regiments.

"All our friends are as they were; little has happened to them of either good or bad. Mrs. Thrale ran a great black hair-dressing pin into her eye; but by great evacuation she kept it from inflaming, and it is almost well. Miss Reynolds has been out of order, but is better. Mrs. Williams is in a very poor state of health.

"If I should write on, I should, perhaps, write only complaints, and therefore I will content myself with telling you, that I love to think on you, and to hear from you; and that I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 310. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 8. 1778.

"DEAR SIR, — Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms."

(Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person, upon every account most dear to me, suffered; and of the dismal state of apprehension in which I now was: adding, that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy.)

"Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period?

It is entitled "*De Animi Tranquillitate.*" (1) I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res quies*; but I fear I shall never attain it: for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness. I am, dear Sir, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 311. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 24. 1778.

"DEAR SIR, — To a letter so interesting as your last, it is proper to return some answer, however little I may be disposed to write. Your alarm at your lady's illness was reasonable, and not disproportionate to the appearance of the disorder. I hope your physical friend's conjecture is now verified, and all fear of a consumption at an end: a little care and exercise will then restore her. London is a good air for ladies; and if you bring her hither, I will do for her what she did for me — I will retire from my apartments for her accommodation. Behave kindly to her, and keep her cheerful.

"You always seem to call for tenderness. Know then, that in the first month of the present year I very highly esteem and very cordially love you. I hope to tell you this at the beginning of every year as long as we live; and why should we trouble ourselves to tell or hear it oftener? Tell Veronica, Euphemia, and Alexander, that I wish them, as well as their parents, many happy years.

"You have ended the negro's cause much to my mind. Lord Auchinleck and dear Lord Hailes were on the side of liberty. Lord Hailes's name reproaches me; but if he saw my languid neglect of my own affairs, he would rather pity than resent my neglect of

(1) Florence Wilson, born at Elgin, died near Lyons in 1547. Besides the dialogue "De Animi Tranquillitate," he wrote one or two other works of no note. — C.

his. I hope to mend, *ut et mihi vivam et amicis*. I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON.

"My service to my fellow-traveller, Joseph."

Johnson maintained a long and intimate friendship with Mr. Welch, who succeeded the celebrated Henry Fielding as one of his majesty's justices of the peace for Westminster; kept a regular office for the police of that great district; and discharged his important trust, for many years, faithfully and ably. Johnson, who had an eager and unceasing curiosity to know human life in all its variety, told me, that he attended Mr. Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examinations of the culprits; but that he found an almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy. Mr. Welch's health being impaired, he was advised to try the effect of a warm climate; and Johnson, by his interest with Mr. Chamier, procured him leave of absence to go to Italy, and a promise that the pension or salary of two hundred pounds a year, which government allowed him, should not be discontinued. Mr. Welch accordingly went abroad, accompanied by his daughter Anne, a young lady of uncommon talents and literature.

LETTER 312. TO SAUNDERS WELCH, ESQ.
AT THE ENGLISH COFFEE-HOUSE, ROME.

"Feb. 3. 1778.

"DEAR SIR, — To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign

countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no particular time, in which I had any thing particular to say; and general expressions of good will, I hope, our long friendship is grown too solid to want.

"Of public affairs you have information from the newspapers wherever you go, for the English keep no secret; and of other things Mrs. Nollekens informs you. My intelligence could, therefore, be of no use; and Miss Nancy's letters made it unnecessary to write to you for information; I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion and nearer approaches to the sun did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health the accounts have lately been more pleasing; and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved by a vast accession of images and observations which your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity, almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end; but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollections, and to supply each other's omissions. The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's miseries is, that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store, that your conversation will be not easily exhausted; one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

"That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you propose to return this year. There is no need of

haste: do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniences of your native clime. July seems to be the proper month. August and September will prepare you for the winter. After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home; and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

"Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things; and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narratives, unless she can recur to some written memorials. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain; for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them; for, faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter.

"Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I imagine that you may wish to know something of me. I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health. The hand of time, or of disease, is very heavy upon me. I pass restless and uneasy nights, harassed with convulsions of my breast, and flatulencies at my stomach; and restless nights make heavy days. But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end. When we meet, we will try to for-

get our cares and our maladies, and contribute, as we can, to the cheerfulness of each other. If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better; but I do not know that it was in my power. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter, while it gives admirable advice how to travel to the best advantage, and will therefore be of very general use, is another eminent proof of Johnson's warm and affectionate heart. (1)

LETTER 313. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Feb. 19. 1778.

"DEAR MADAM, — I have several little things to mention which I have hitherto neglected. You judged rightly in thinking that the bust (2) would not please. It is condemned by Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Reynolds, and Mrs. Garrick; so that your disapprobation is not singular.

"These things have never cost me any thing, so that I do not much know the price. My bust was made for the Exhibition, and shown for honour of the artist, who is a man of reputation above any of the other sculptors. To be modelled in clay costs, I believe, twenty guineas; but the casts, when the model is

(1) The friendship between Mr. Welch and him was unbroken. Mr. Welch died not many months before him, and bequeathed him five guineas for a ring, which Johnson received with tenderness, as a kind memorial. His regard was constant for his friend Mr. Welch's daughters; of whom Jane is married to Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, whose merit is too well known to require any praise from me. — B. — See a great deal about Miss Anne in Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*. — C.

(2) This bust, and the walking-stick mentioned by Boswell, are now in the possession of Mrs. Pearson, of Hill Ridware, near Lichfield. — HARWOOD.

made, are of no great price; whether a guinea, or two guineas, I cannot tell.

"When you complained for want of oysters, I ordered you a barrel weekly for a month; you sent me word sooner that you had enough, but I did not countermand the rest. If you could not eat them, could you not give them away? When you want any thing send me word. I am very poorly, and have very restless and oppressive nights, but always hope for better. Pray for me. I am, &c. Sam. Johnson."

Letter 314. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 26. 1778.

"My dear Sir, — Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say; for my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language; for, says he, 'we live in a critical, though not a learned age; and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax.' I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his 'Annals' so long. He says, 'I am sorry to see that Dr. Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatic, be very merry or very sad?' I envy his lordship's comfortable constitution; but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles. I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own hand-writing, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied; and I have now put that off so long that it will be better to bring it with me than send it,

as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner when I solicit you in person.

"My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment: but if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde-park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis; for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

"I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the house of lords as one of Douglas's counsel, in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him.

"I am sorry poor Mrs. Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr. Levett, who, I suppose, holds his usual place at your breakfast-table. (1) I ever am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

(1) Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, humorously observed, that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crum for himself, *threw* to his humble friend. — B. — Perhaps the word *threw* is here too strong. Dr. Johnson never treated Levett with contempt; it is clear indeed, from various circumstances, that he had great kindness for him. I have often seen Johnson at breakfast, accompanied, or rather attended, by Levett, who had always the management of the tea-kettle. — M. — Sir J. Hawkins states, that "Dr. Johnson frequently observed that Levett was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday." — C.

LETTER 315. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 28. 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You are at present busy amongst the English poets, preparing, for the public instruction and entertainment, prefaces biographical and critical. It will not, therefore, be out of season to appeal to you for the decision of a controversy which has arisen between a lady and me concerning a passage in Parnell. That poet tells us, that his hermit quitted his cell

> '—— to know the world by sight,
> To find if *books* or *swains* report it right;
> (For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
> Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).'

I maintain, that there is an inconsistency here; for as the hermit's notions of the world were formed from the reports both of *books* and *swains*, he could not justly be said to know by *swains alone*. Be pleased to judge between us, and let us have your reasons. (1)

"What do you say to 'Taxation no Tyranny,' now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever else his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you in politics but upon two points—the Middlesex election, and the taxation of the Americans by the British houses of representatives. There is a *charm* in the word *parliament*, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and a warm tory, I regret that the king does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his royal person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with

(1) See this subject discussed in a subsequent page, under May 8, 1779.—M.

all its dominions, than if 'the rays of regal bounty'(1) were 'to shine' upon America through that dense and troubled body, a modern British parliament. But, enough of this subject; for your angry voice at Ashbourne upon it still sounds awful 'in my mind's *ears*.' — I ever am, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 316. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"March 5. 1778.

"MADAM, — And so you are alarmed, naughty lady? You might know that I was ill enough when Mr. Thrale brought you my excuse. Could you think that I missed the honour of being at (your) table for any slight reason? But you (have) too many to miss any one of us, and I am (proud) to be remembered at last. I am much better. A little cough (still) remains which will not confine me. To houses (like yours) of great delicacy I am not willing to bring it.

"Now, dear Madam, we must talk of business. Poor Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, is soliciting his friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff. Several of them gave him five guineas. It would be an honour to him to owe part of his relief to Mrs. Montagu.

"Let me thank you, Madam, once more for your inquiry; you have, perhaps, among your numerous train not one that values a kind word or a kind look more than, Madam, yours, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 317. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"March 6. 1778.

"MADAM, — I hope Davies (2), who does not want wit, does not want gratitude, and then he will be almost as

(1) Alluding to a line in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," describing Cardinal Wolsey in a state of elevation: —

"Through him the rays of regal bounty shine."

(2) Tom Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, in whose behalf he

thankful for the bill as I am for the letter that enclosed it.

"If I do not lose, what I hope always to keep, my reverence for transcendent merit, I shall continue to be with unalterable fidelity, Madam, your &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 318. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, March 12. 1778.

"My dear Sir, — The alarm of your late illness distressed me but a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached me, I found it contradicted in 'The London Chronicle,' which I could depend upon as authentic concerning you, Mr. Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper in which 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it; and he says he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he read it. He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr. Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning: and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear Sir, your most obliged, faithful, and affectionate humble servant,

"James Boswell."

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more than once appealed to the charity of Mrs. Montague. — C.

CHAPTER II.

1778

Inmates of Bolt Court.—Tom Davies.—Counsel at the Bar of the House of Commons.—Thomas à Kempis.—Uses of a Diary.—Strict Adherence to Truth.—Ghosts.—John Wesley.—Alcibiades's Dog.—Emigration.—Parliamentary Eloquence.—Place Hunters.—Irish Language.—Thicknesse's "Travels."—Honesty.—Temptation.—Dr. Kennedy's Tragedy.—Shooting a Highwayman.—Mr. Dunning.—Contentment.—Laxity of Narration.—Mrs. Montagu.—Harris of Salisbury.—Definition.—Wine-drinking.—Pleasure.—Goldsmith.—Charles the Fifth.—Best English Sermons.—"Seeing Scotland."—Absenteeism.—Delany's "Observations on Swift."

On Wednesday, March 18., I arrived in London, and was informed by good Mr. Francis, that his master was better, and was gone to Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which place I wrote to him, begging to know when he would be in town. He was not expected for some time; but next day, having called on Dr. Taylor, in Dean's-yard, Westminster I found him there, and was told he had come to town for a few hours. He met me with his usual kindness, but instantly returned to the writing of something on which he was employed when I came in, and on which he seemed much intent. Finding

him thus engaged, I made my visit very short, and had no more of his conversation, except his expressing a serious regret that a friend of ours [Mr Langton] was living at too much expense, considering how poor an appearance he made: "If," said he, "a man has splendour from his expense, if he spends his money in pride or in pleasure, he has value; but if he lets others spend it for him, which is most commonly the case, he has no advantage from it."

On Friday, March 20., I found him at his own house, sitting with Mrs. Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose: Mrs Desmoulins (1), and, I think, her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs. Desmoulins herself told me he allowed her half a guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension. (2)

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his

(1) Daughter of Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing-master.

(2) The dissensions that the many odd inhabitants of his house chose to live constantly in, distressed and mortified him exceedingly. He really was sometimes afraid of going home, because he was so sure to be met at the door with numberless complaints; and he used to lament pathetically to me, and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian master, who was much his favourite, that they made his life miserable from the impossibility he found of making theirs happy, when every favour he bestowed on one was wormwood to the rest. If, however, I ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would instantly set about softening the one and justifying the other; and finished commonly by telling me, that I knew not how to make allowances for situations I never experienced. — Piozzi.

life very remarkable. Mr. Howard, of Lichfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told me, that when he was a boy at the Charterhouse, his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr. Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room, of poor appearance. Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a schoolboy, of the course of his education, and other particulars. When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder. He added, that when he was going away, Mr. Johnson presented him with half a guinea; and this, said Mr. Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another.

We retired from Mrs. Williams to another room. Tom Davies soon after joined us. He had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr. Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. After he went away, Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. I said, I believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him, "He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone." JOHNSON. "I believe so too, Sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line? Another line would have driven him from his shop!"

I told him that I was engaged as counsel at the bar of the house of commons to oppose a road-bill

in the county of Stirling, and asked him what mode he would advise me to follow in addressing such an audience. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you must provide yourself with a good deal of extraneous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time; for you must consider, that they do not listen much. If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them." He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought "it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads: *it was destroying a certain portion of liberty without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*" When I mentioned this observation next day to Mr. Wilkes, he pleasantly said, "What! does *he* talk of liberty? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in *his* mouth as *religion* in *mine*." Mr. Wilkes's advice as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the house of commons was not more respectful towards the senate than that of Dr. Johnson. "Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee (1) is the best heard there of any counsel; and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us."

(1) Mr. Lee, afterwards Solicitor-General in the Rockingham administration. "He was a man of strong parts, though of coarse manners, and who never hesitated to express in the coarsest language whatever he thought." — *Wraxall's Mem.* vol. ii. p. 237. He was particularly distinguished by the violence of his invective against the person and administration of Lord Shelburne in 1782. — C.

In my interview with Dr. Johnson this evening, I was quite easy, quite as his companion; upon which I find in my journal the following reflection: "So ready is my mind to suggest matter for dissatisfaction, that I felt a sort of regret that I was so easy. I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral, and religious character. I have a wonderful superstitious love of *mystery;* when, perhaps, the truth is, that it is owing to the cloudy darkness of my own mind. I should be glad that I am more advanced in my progress of being, so that I can view Dr. Johnson with a steadier and clearer eye. My dissatisfaction to-night was foolish. Would it not be foolish to regret that we shall have less mystery in a future state? That 'we now see in a glass darkly,' but shall 'then see face to face?'" This reflection, which I thus freely communicate, will be valued by the thinking part of my readers, who may have themselves experienced a similar state of mind.

He returned next day to Streatham, to Mr. Thrale's; where, as Mr. Strahan once complained to me, "he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends." I was kept in London by business, and wrote to him on the 27th, that "a separation from him for a week, when we were so near, was equal to a separation for a year, when we were at four hundred miles distance." I went to Streatham on Monday, March 30. Before he appeared, Mrs. Thrale made a very characteristical remark: "I do not know for certain what will

please Dr. Johnson: but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise any thing, even what he likes extravagantly."

At dinner he laughed at querulous declamations against the age, on account of luxury, — increase of London, — scarcity of provisions, — and other such topics. "Houses," said he, "will be built till rents fall; and corn is more plentiful now than ever it was."

I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man, who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day. Mrs. Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it, "The story told you by the old *woman*." "Now, Madam," said I, "give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this." I presumed to take an opportunity, in the presence of Johnson, of showing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration.

Thomas à Kempis (he observed) must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it. It is said to have been printed, in one language or other, as many times as there have been months since it first came out. (1) I always was struck with this sentence in it: "Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be. (2)

(1) The first edition was in 1492. Between that period and 1792, according to this account, there were 3,600 editions. But this is very improbable. — M.

(2) The original passage is: "Si non potes te talem facere,

He said, "I was angry with Hurd about Cowley for having published a selection of his works: but, upon better consideration, I think there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he chooses of any author, if he does not put the rest out of the way. A man, for instance, may print the Odes of Horace alone." He seemed to be in a more indulgent humour than when this subject was discussed between him and Mr. Murphy. (1)

When we were at tea and coffee, there came in Lord Trimlestown, in whose family was an ancient Irish peerage, but it suffered by taking the generous side in the troubles of the last century. (2) He was a man of pleasing conversation, and was accompanied by a young gentleman, his son.

I mentioned that I had in my possession the Life of Sir Robert Sibbald, the celebrated Scottish antiquary, and founder of the royal college of physicians at Edinburgh, in the original manuscript in his own handwriting; and that it was, I believed, the most natural and candid account of himself that ever was given by any man. As an instance, he tells that the Duke of Perth, then chancellor of Scotland, pressed him very much to come over to the Roman Catholic faith: that he resisted all his

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qualem vis, quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere beneplacitum?" De Imit. Christ. lib. i. c. xvi. — J. BOSWELL, Jun.

(1) See *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 146. — C.

(2) Since this was written, the attainder has been reversed, and Nicholas Barnewall is now a peer of Ireland with this title. The person mentioned in the text had studied physic, and prescribed *gratis* to the poor. Hence arose the subsequent conversation. — M.

grace's arguments for a considerable time, till one day he felt himself, as it were, instantaneously convinced, and with tears in his eyes ran into the duke's arms, and embraced the ancient religion; that he continued very steady in it for some time, and accompanied his grace to London one winter, and lived in his household; that there he found the rigid fasting prescribed by the church very severe upon him; that this disposed him to re-consider the controversy; and having then seen that he was in the wrong, he returned to Protestantism. I talked of some time or other publishing this curious life. MRS. THRALE. "I think you had as well let alone that publication. To discover such weakness exposes a man when he is gone." JOHNSON. "Nay, it is an honest picture of human nature. How often are the primary motives of our greatest actions as small as Sibbald's for his re-conversion!" MRS. THRALE. "But may they not as well be forgotten?" JOHNSON. "No, Madam; a man loves to review his own mind. That is the use of a diary or journal." LORD TRIMLESTOWN. "True, Sir. As the ladies love to see themselves in a glass, so a man likes to see himself in his journal." BOSWELL. "A very pretty allusion." JOHNSON. "Yes, indeed." BOSWELL. "And as a lady adjusts her dress before a mirror, a man adjusts his character by looking at his journal." I next year found the very same thought in Atterbury's "Funeral Sermon on Lady Cutts;" where, having mentioned her Diary, he says, "In this glass she every day dressed her mind." This is a proof of coincidence, and not

of plagiarism; for I had never read that sermon before.

Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth[1] even in the most minute particulars. "Accustom your children," said he, "constantly to this: if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end." BOSWELL. "It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened." Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, "Nay, this is too much. If Dr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching." JOHNSON. "Well, Madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

In his review of Dr. Warton's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," Johnson has given the following salutary caution upon this subject: "Nothing but experience could evince the

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 22. — C.

frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive that so many groundless reports should be propagated as every man of eminence may hear of himself. Some men relate what they think as what they know; some men of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy ascribe to one man what belongs to another; and some talk on without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive relaters."(1) Had he lived to read what Sir John Hawkins and Mrs. Piozzi have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated! He was, indeed, so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person who, upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the *incredulus odi*. He would say, with a significant look and decisive tone, "It is not so. Do not tell this again."(2) He inculcated upon all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if they had not been acquainted with Johnson.

(1) Literary Magazine, 1756, p. 37.

(2) The following plausible but over-prudent counsel on this subject is given by an Italian writer, quoted by *Rhedi* "*De generatione insectorum*," with the epithet of "*divino poeta*."

"Sempre à quel ver ch' a faccia di menzogna
Dee l'uom chiudere le labbra quanto ei puote;
Però chè senza colpa fa vergogna."

Talking of ghosts, he said, "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it."

He said, "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

On Friday, April 3., I dined with him in London, in a company (1) where were present several eminent men, whom I shall not name, but distinguish their parts in the conversation by different letters.

F. "I have been looking at this famous antique marble dog of Mr. Jennings (2), valued at a thousand guineas, said to be Alcibiades's dog." JOHNSON. "His tail then must be docked. That was the

(1) THE CLUB. — This seems to be the only instance in which Mr. Boswell has ventured to give in any detail the conversation of that society; and we see that on this occasion he has not mentioned the *names*, but has disguised the parties under what look like *initials*. All these letters, however, — even with the names of the company before us, — it is not easy to appropriate. It appears by the books of the Club, as Mr. Hatchet informs me, that the company on that evening consisted of Dr. Johnson, president, Mr. Burke, Mr. Boswell, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Johnson (*again named*), Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Upper Ossory, and Mr. R. B. Sheridan. In Mr. Boswell's account, the initial E. no doubt stands for *Edmund* Burke; F., in allusion to his family name of *Fitzpatrick*, probably means Lord Upper Ossory; but the appropriation of the other letters is very difficult. — C.

(2) This sculpture was at this date an object of curiosity in London. See *Ann. Reg.* April 4., 1778, p. 174, where it is stated to have been sold for a thousand guineas. — C.

mark of Alcibiades's dog." E. "A thousand guineas! The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate, a dead dog would, indeed, be better than a living lion." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it, which is so highly estimated. Every thing that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable. The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose; Johnson (1), who rode upon three horses at a time; in short, all such men deserve the applause of mankind, not on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited." BOSWELL. "Yet a misapplication of time and assiduity is not to be encouraged. Addison, in one of his 'Spectators,' commends the judgment of a king, who, as a suitable reward to a man that by long perseverance had attained to the art of throwing a barley-corn through the eye of a needle, gave him a bushel of barley." JOHNSON. "He must have been a king of Scotland, where barley is scarce." F. "One of the most remarkable antique figures of an animal is the boar at Florence." JOHNSON. "The first boar that is well made in marble should be preserved as a wonder. When men arrive at a facility of making boars well, then the workmanship is not of such value; but they should, however, be preserved as examples, and as a greater security for the restoration of the art, should it be lost."

(1) See antè, Vol. . p. 173. — C.

E. "We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous." J. "That sounds very much like a paradox." E. "Exportation of men, like exportation of all other commodities, makes more be produced." JOHNSON. "But there would be more people were there not emigration, provided there were food for more." E. "No; leave a few breeders, and you 'll have more people than if there were no emigration." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is plain there will be more people, if there are more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls." E. "There are bulls (1) enough in Ireland." JOHNSON (smiling). "So, Sir, I should think from your argument." BOSWELL. "You said exportation of men, like exportation of other commodities, makes more be produced. But a bounty is given to encourage the exportation of corn, and no bounty is given for the exportation of men; though, indeed, those who go, gain by it." R. "But the bounty on the exportation of corn is paid at home." E. "That 's the same thing." JOHNSON. "No, Sir." R. "A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating." BOSWELL. "I can understand that emigration may be the cause that more people may be produced in a country; but the country will not therefore be the more populous; for the

(1) All this, as Mr. Boswell elsewhere says, must be a very imperfect record of the conversation. Mr. Burke, no doubt, meant to allude (perhaps with a *double meaning*) to the superabundant population of Ireland. — C.

people issue from it. It can only be said that there is a flow of people. It is an encouragement to have children, to know that they can get a living by emigration." R. "Yes, if there were an emigration of children under six years of age. But they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home." C. "It is remarkable that the most unhealthy countries, where there are the most destructive diseases, such as Egypt and Bengal, are the most populous." JOHNSON. "Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases. *That* is the true state of the proposition." C. "Holland is very unhealthy, yet it is exceedingly populous." JOHNSON. "I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries. Disease cannot be the cause of populousness; for it not only carries off a great proportion of the people; but those who are left are weakened, and unfit for the purposes of increase."

R. "Mr. E., I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect,—that not one vote would be gained by it." E. "Waving your compliment to me, I shall say, in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in parliament. A man, who has vanity, speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political

reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered. JOHNSON. "And, Sir, there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them, we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong, without its being shown both to themselves and to the world." E. "The house of commons is a mixed body. (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (smiling), but I take the whole house.) It is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence." JOHNSON. "We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do every thing. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring; it must receive a colour on that side. In the house of commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd. No, Sir; there must always be

right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance." BOSWELL. "There is surely always a majority in parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support government, without requiring any pretext." E. "True, Sir; that majority will always follow

'Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.

BOSWELL. "Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to any thing, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey."(1) J. "But taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as to follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire." BOSWELL. "I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate political hunters." E. "I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority. I have always been in the minority." P. "The house of commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument; passion and pride rise against it." R. "What would be the consequence, if a minister, sure of a majority in the house of

(1) Lord Bolingbroke, who, however detestable as a metaphysician, must be allowed to have had admirable talents as a political writer, thus describes the house of commons in his 'Letter to Sir William Wyndham;'—"You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged."

commons, should resolve that there should be no speaking at all upon his side?" E. "He must soon go out. That has been tried; but it was found it would not do." ———

E. "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonic, a mixture of the northern tongues; it has much English in it." JOHNSON. "It may have been radically Teutonic, but English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once, when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English; *stroem*, like *stream*, and it signified *tide*." (1) E. "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet, in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would at first think that this could be English; but, when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, knob, so we have *rosebuds*."

JOHNSON. "I have been reading Thicknesse's Travels, which I think are entertaining." BOSWELL. "What, Sir, a good book?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, to read once. I do not say you are to make a study of it, and digest it; and I believe it to be a true book in his intention. All travellers generally mean to tell truth; though Thicknesse observes, upon Smollett's account of his alarming a whole town in France by firing a blunderbuss, and frightening a French nobleman till he made him tie on his portmanteau, that he would be loath to say Smollett

(1) Dr. Johnson seems to have been in error in this point. *Stroem* signifies just what *stream* does in English — *current*, flowing water, and thence *tide* and the languages have undoubtedly a general similarity. — C.

had told two lies in one page; but he had found the only town in France where these things could have happened. Travellers must often be mistaken. In every thing, except where mensuration can be applied, they may honestly differ. There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased."

E. "From the experience which I have had, — and I have had a great deal, — I have learnt to think *better* of mankind." JOHNSON. "From my experience I have found them worse in commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat than I had any notion of; but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived." J. "Less just and more beneficent." JOHNSON. "And, really, it is wonderful, — considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them, — it is wonderful how much they do for others. As it is said of the greatest liar, that he tells more truth than falsehood; so it may be said of the worst man, that he does more good than evil." BOSWELL. "Perhaps from experience men may be found *happier* than we suppose." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; the more we inquire we shall find men the less happy." P. "As to thinking better or worse of mankind from experience, some cunning people will not be satisfied unless they have put men to the test, as they think. There is a very good story told of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in his character of a justice of the peace. A gentleman brought his servant before him, upon an accusation of having stolen some money from him; but it having come out that he had laid it purposely in the

servant's way, in order to try his honesty, Sir Godfrey sent the master to prison." (1) JOHNSON. "To resist temptation once is not a sufficient proof of honesty. If a servant, indeed, were to resist the continued temptation of silver lying in a window, as some people let it lie, when he is sure his master does not know how much there is of it, he would give a strong proof of honesty. But this is a proof to which you have no right to put a man. You know, humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in so far as you approach temptation to a man, you do him an injury; and, if he is overcome, you share his guilt." P. "And, when once overcome, it is easier for him to be got the better of again." BOSWELL. "Yes, you are his seducer; you have debauched him. I have known a man resolved to put friendship to the test, by asking a friend to lend him money, merely with that view, when he did not want it." JOHNSON. "That is very wrong, Sir. Your friend may be a narrow man, and yet have many good qualities: narrowness may be his only fault. Now you are trying his general character as a friend by one particular singly, in which he happens to be

(1) Pope thus introduces this story: —

> "Faith, in such case if you should prosecute,
> I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit,
> Who sent the thief who stole the cash away,
> And punish'd him that put it in his way."
>
> *Imit. of Horace*, b. ii. ep. 2. — B.

Horace Walpole, in his "Anecdotes of Painting," relates the story as of Sir Godfrey's "dismissing a soldier who had stolen a joint of meat, and accusing the butcher of having tempted him by it." — CHALMERS.

defective, when, in truth, his character is composed of many particulars."

E. "I understand the hogshead of claret, which this society was favoured with by our friend the dean (1), is nearly out; I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending it also as a present." JOHNSON. "I am willing to offer my services as secretary on this occasion." P. "As many as are for Dr. Johnson being secretary hold up your hands. — Carried unanimously." BOSWELL. "He will be our dictator." JOHNSON. "No, the company is to dictate to me. I am only to write for wine; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none; I shall not be suspected of having forged the application. I am no more than humble *scribe*." E. "Then you shall *prescribe*." BOSWELL. "Very well. The first play of words to-day." J. "No, no; the *bulls* in Ireland." JOHNSON. "Were I your dictator, you should have no wine. It would be my business *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury." (Smiling). E. "If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for your master of horse."

On Saturday, April 4., I drank tea with Johnson at Dr. Taylor's, where he had dined. He entertained us with an account of a tragedy written by a Dr. Kennedy (not the Lisbon physician). "The

(1) Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, afterwards Bishop of Killaloe and Limerick. — C.

catastrophe of it," said he, "was, that a king who was jealous of his queen with his prime minister, castrated himself. (1) This tragedy was actually shown about in manuscript to several people, and, amongst others, to Mr Fitzherbert, who repeated to me two lines of the prologue: —

> 'Our hero's fate we have but gently touch'd;
> The fair might blame us, if it were less couch'd!'

It is hardly to be believed what absurd and indecent images men will introduce into their writings, without being sensible of the absurdity and indecency. I remember Lord Orrery told me, that there was a pamphlet written against Sir Robert Walpole, the whole of which was an allegory on the Phallick Obscenity. The Duchess of Buckingham asked Lord Orrery *who* this person was? He answered he did not know. She said, she would send to Mr. Pulteney, who, she supposed, could inform her. So, then, to prevent her from making herself ridiculous, Lord Orrery sent her grace a note, in which he gave her to understand what was meant."

He was very silent this evening, and read in a variety of books; suddenly throwing down one, and taking up another.

He talked of going to Streatham that night. TAYLOR. "You'll be robbed, if you do; or you

(1) The reverse of the story of Combabus, on which Mr. David Hume told Lord Macartney, that a friend of his had written a tragedy. It is, however, possible, that I may have been inaccurate in my perception of what Dr. Johnson related, and that he may have been talking of the same ludicrous tragical subject that Mr. Hume had mentioned. — B. — The story of Combabus, which was originally told by Lucian, may be found in Bayle's Dictionary. — M.

must shoot a highwayman. Now, I would rather be robbed than do that; I would not shoot a highwayman." JOHNSON. "But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me, than afterwards swear against him at the Old Bailey, to take away his life, after he has robbed me. I am surer I am right in the one case, than in the other. I may be mistaken as to the man when I swear; I cannot be mistaken, if I shoot him in the act. Besides, we feel less reluctance to take away a man's life, when we are heated by the injury, than to do it at a distance of time by an oath, after we have cooled." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, you would rather act from the motive of private passion, than that of public advantage." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, when I shoot the highwayman, I act from both." BOSWELL. "Very well, very well. There is no catching him." JOHNSON. "At the same time, one does not know what to say. For perhaps one may, a year after, hang himself from uneasiness for having shot a highwayman. (1) Few minds are fit to be trusted with so great a thing." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir,

(1) The late Duke of Montrose was generally said to have been uneasy on that account; but I can contradict the report from his grace's own authority. As he used to admit me to very easy conversation with him, I took the liberty to introduce the subject. His grace told me, that when riding one night near London, he was attacked by two highwaymen on horseback, and that he instantly shot one of them, upon which the other galloped off; that his servant, who was very well mounted, proposed to pursue him and take him, but that his grace said, "No, we have had blood enough; I hope the man may live to repent." His grace, upon my presuming to put the question, assured me, that his mind was not at all clouded by what he had thus done in self-defence.

you would not shoot him?" JOHNSON. "But I might be vexed afterwards for that too."

Thrale's carriage not having come for him, as he expected, I accompanied him some part of the way home to his own house. I told him, that I had talked of him to Mr. Dunning a few days before, and had said, that in his company we did not so much interchange conversation, as listen to him; and that Dunning observed, upon this, "One is always willing to listen to Dr. Johnson;" to which I answered, "That is a great deal from you, Sir." "Yes, Sir," said Johnson, "a great deal indeed. Here is a man willing to listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year." BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, it is right to tell one man of such a handsome thing, which has been said of him by another. It tends to increase benevolence." JOHNSON. "Undoubtedly it is right, Sir."

On Tuesday, April 7., I breakfasted with him at his house. He said, "Nobody was content." I mentioned to him a respectable person [1] in Scotland whom he knew; and I asserted, that I really believed he was always content. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not content with the present; he has always some new scheme, some new plantation, something which is future. You know he was not content as a widower, for he married again." BOSWELL. "But he is not restless." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is only locally at rest. A chymist is locally at rest; but his mind is hard at work. This gentleman has

(1) Lord Auchinleck, Mr. Boswell's father.—C.

done with external exertions. It is too late for him to engage in distant projects.'' BOSWELL. "He seems to amuse himself quite well; to have his attention fixed, and his tranquillity preserved, by very small matters. I have tried this; but it would not do with me." JOHNSON (laughing). "No, Sir: it must be born with a man to be contented to take up with little things. Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things without disgracing themselves: a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle, I should have done nothing else." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument?" JOHNSON. "No, sir. I once bought me a flageolet; but I never made out a tune." BOSWELL. "A flageolet, Sir! — so small an instrument (1)? I should have liked to hear you play on the violoncello. *That* should have been *your* instrument." JOHNSON. "Sir, I might as well have played on the violoncello as another; but I should have done nothing else. No, Sir; a man would never undertake great things, could he be amused with small. I once tried knotting. Dempster's sister undertook to teach me; but I could not learn it." BOSWELL. "So, Sir; it will be related in pompous narrative, 'Once for his amusement he tried knotting; nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff.'" JOHNSON. "Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As

(1) When I told this to Miss Seward, she smiled, and repeated with admirable readiness, from "Acis and Galatea," —

"Bring me a hundred reeds of ample growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth."

a freeman of Aberdeen, I should be a knitter of stockings." He asked me to go down with him and dine at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which I agreed. I had lent him "An Account of Scotland, in 1702," written by a man of various inquiry, an English chaplain to a regiment stationed there. JOHNSON. "It is sad stuff, Sir, miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as 'Martin's Account of the Hebrides' is written. A man could not write so ill, if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better."

He talked to me with serious concern of a certain female friend's "laxity of narration, and inattention to truth." "I am as much vexed," said he, "at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her, 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you, what the highest of mankind have died for, rather than bear.' You know, Sir, the highest of mankind have died rather than bear to be told they had uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it; I am weary." BOSWELL. "Was not Dr. John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, Sir? He once told me, that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting."(1) JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I do not

(1) Lord Macartney observes upon this passage, "I have heard him tell many things, which, though embellished by their mode of narrative, had their foundation in truth; but I never remember any thing approaching to this. If he had written it, I should have supposed some wag had put the figure of one before the three." I am, however, absolutely certain that Dr Campbell told me it, and I gave particular attention to it, being myself a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is

know that Campbell ever lied with pen and ink; but you could not entirely depend on any thing he told you in conversation, if there was fact mixed with it. However, I loved Campbell: he was a solid orthodox man: he had a reverence for religion. Though defective in practice, he was religious in principle; and he did nothing grossly wrong that I have heard."(1)

I told him that I had been present the day before, when Mrs. Montagu, the literary lady, sat to Miss Reynolds for her picture; and that she said, "she had bound up Mr. Gibbon's *History* without the last two offensive chapters; for that she thought the book so far good, as it gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the bad writers *medii ævi*, which the late Lord Lyttleton advised her to read." JOHNSON. "Sir, she has not read them: she shows none of this impetuosity to me: she does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin. She is willing you should think she knows them; but she does not say she does." BOSWELL. "Mr. Harris, who was present, agreed with her." JOHNSON. "Harris was laughing at her, Sir. Harris is

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remarkable concerning drinking. There can be no doubt that some men can drink, without suffering any injury, such a quantity as to others appears incredible. It is but fair to add, that Dr. Campbell told me, he took a very long time to this great potation; and I have heard Dr. Johnson say, "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly, and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Dr. Campbell mentioned a colonel of militia who sat with him all the time, and drank equally.

(1) Dr. John Campbell died about two years before this conversation took place; December 1775.— M.

a sound sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig. (1) I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system." BOSWELL. "He says plain things in a formal and abstract way, to be sure; but his method is good: for to have clear notions upon any subject, we must have recourse to analytic arrangement." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is what every body does, whether they will or no. But sometimes things may be made darker by definition. I see a *cow*. I define her, *Animal quadrupes ruminans cornutum*. But a goat ruminates, and a cow may have no horns. *Cow* is plainer." BOSWELL. "I think Dr. Franklin's definition of *Man* a good one — 'A tool-making animal.'" JOHNSON. "But many a man never made a tool: and suppose a man without arms, he could not make a tool."

Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this."(2) BOSWELL. "Why, then, Sir, did you leave it off?"

(1) What my friend meant by these words concerning the amiable philosopher of Salisbury, I am at a loss to understand. A friend suggests, that Johnson thought his *manner* as a writer affected, while at the same time the *matter* did not compensate for that fault. In short, that he meant to make a remark quite different from that which a celebrated gentleman made on a very eminent physician: He is a coxcomb, but a *satisfactory coxcomb*. — B. — The *celebrated gentleman* here alluded to was the late Right Hon. William Gerard Hamilton. — M.

(2) Probably on some occasion during his *first* residence at Oxford, as an under-graduate. It could hardly have happened during his visit in 1754; and certainly not in any of the subsequent ones. — C.

JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old [1], and want it." BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." JOHNSON. "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational." BOSWELL. "But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." JOHNSON. "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." BOSWELL. "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have." JOHNSON. "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. When a man says he had pleasure with a woman, he does not mean conversation, but something of a different nature. Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now, what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a

(1) He was now in his *seventieth year.* — C.

woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life." BOSWELL. "She must have been an animal, a beast." JOHNSON "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

I mentioned to him that I had become very weary in company where I heard not a single intellectual sentence, except that "a man who had been settled ten years in Minorca was become a much inferior man to what he was in London, because a man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place." JOHNSON. "A man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place, whose mind is enlarged only because he has lived in a large place: but what is got by books and thinking is preserved in a narrow place as well as in a large place. A man cannot know modes of life as well in Minorca as in London; but he may study mathematics as well in Minorca." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir: if you had remained ten years in the Isle of Col, you would not have been the man that you now are." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if I had been there from fifteen to twenty-five; but not if from twenty-five to thirty-five." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, the spirits which I have in London make me do every thing with more readiness and vigour. I can talk twice as much in London as any where else."

Of Goldsmith, he said, "He was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame. A man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburden his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours(1) is not

(1) Mr. Burke.—C.

so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation."

Soon after our arrival at Thrale's, I heard one of the maids calling eagerly on another to go to Dr. Johnson. I wondered what this could mean. I afterwards learnt, that it was to give her a Bible, which he had brought from London as a present to her.

He was for a considerable time occupied in reading "Mémoires de Fontenelle," leaning and swinging upon the low gate into the court, without his hat.

I looked into Lord Kaimes's "Sketches of the History of Man;" and mentioned to Dr. Johnson his censure of Charles V., for celebrating his funeral obsequies in his lifetime, which, I told him, I had been used to think a solemn and affecting act." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man may dispose his mind to think so of that act of Charles; but it is so liable to ridicule, that if one man out of ten thousand laughs at it, he'll make the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine laugh too." I could not agree with him in this.

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to-day of mentioning several to him. "Atterbury?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, one of the best." BOSWELL. "Tillotson?" JOHNSON. "Why, not now. I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been

applauded by so many suffrages.—South is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language.—Seed has a very fine style; but he is not very theological.—Jortin's sermons are very elegant.—Sherlock's style, too, is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study.—And you may add Smalridge. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style: every body composes pretty well. There are no such inharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr. Clarke's sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he is not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretic; so one is aware of it." BOSWELL. "I like Ogden's Sermons on Prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtilty of reasoning." JOHNSON. "I should like to read all that Ogden has written." BOSWELL. "What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence." JOHNSON. "We have no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for any thing; if you mean that kind of eloquence." A CLERGYMAN (whose name I do not recollect). "Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions?" JOHNSON. "They were nothing, Sir, be they addressed to what they may."

At dinner, Mrs. Thrale expressed a wish to go and see Scotland. JOHNSON. "Seeing Scotland, Madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked

stalk. Seeing the Hebrides, indeed, is seeing quite a different scene."

Our poor friend, Mr. Thomas Davies, was soon to have a benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, as *some* relief to his unfortunate circumstances. We were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed to it. However, we thought there was no harm in having our joke, when he could not be hurt by it. I proposed that he should be brought on to speak a prologue upon the occasion; and I began to mutter fragments of what it might be; as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry "Poor Tom's *a-cold*;" — that he owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French; — that he had been satirised as "mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone," but he was now glad of a bone to pick. "Nay," said Johnson, "I would have him to say, —

'Mad Tom is come to see the world again.'"

He and I returned to town in the evening. Upon the road, I endeavoured to maintain in argument, that a landed gentleman is not under any obligation to reside upon his estate; and that by living in London he does no injury to his country. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he does no injury to his country in general, because the money which he draws from it gets back again in circulation; but to his particular district, his particular parish, he does an injury. All that he has to give away is not given to those who have the first claim to it. And

though I have said that the money circulates back, it is a long time before that happens. Then, Sir, a man of family and estate ought to consider himself as having the charge of a district, over which he is to diffuse civility and happiness." [1]

Next day I found him at home in the morning. He praised Delany's "Observations on Swift;" said that his book and Lord Orrery's might both be true, though one viewed Swift more, and the other less, favourably; and that, between both, we might have a complete notion of Swift.

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine, from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog who is under the table."

(1) See, however, antè, Vol. VI. p. 220., where his decision on this subject is more favourable to the absentee. — M.

CHAPTER III

1778.

Horace's Villa. — Country Life. — Great Cities. — French Literature. — Old Age. — " Unius Lacertæ" Potter's Æschylus. — Pope's Homer. — Sir W. Temple's Style. — Elphinston's Martial. — Hawkins's Tragedy. — Insubordination. — Fame. — Use of Riches. — Economy. — Soldiers and Sailors. — Charles Fox. — De Foe. — Cock-Lane Ghost. — Asking Questions. — Hulks. — Foreign Travel. — Short Hand. — Dodd's Poems. — Pennant. — Johnson and Percy. — Stratagem. — Correspondence.

On Thursday, April 9., I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Bishop of St. Asaph (Dr. Shipley), Mr. Allan Ramsay (1), Mr. Gibbon. Mr. Cambridge, and Mr. Langton. Mr. Ramsay had lately returned from Italy, and entertained us with his observations upon Horace's villa, which he had examined with great care. I relished this much, as it brought fresh into my mind what I had viewed with great pleasure thirteen years before. The bishop, Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Cambridge, joined with Mr. Ramsay, in recollecting the various lines in Horace relating to the subject.

(1) An eminent painter, son of the Scottish poet: he died in 1784, at Dover, on his return from his fourth visit to Italy. — C.

Horace's journey to Brundusium being mentioned, Johnson observed, that the brook which he describes is to be seen now, exactly as at that time: nd that he had often wondered how it happened, hat small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been changed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation upon the surface of the earth. CAMBRIDGE. "A Spanish writer has this thought in a poetical conceit. After observing, that most of the solid structures of Rome are totally perished, while the Tiber remains the same, he adds, —

> 'Lo que èra firme huió, solamente
> Lo Fugitivo permanece y dura.'"

JOHNSON. "Sir, that is taken from Janus Vitalis: —

> ———————— immota labescunt;
> Et quæ perpetuò sunt agitata manent.'"

The bishop said, it appeared from Horace's writings that he was a cheerful, contented man. JOHNSON. "We have no reason to believe that, my Lord. Are we to think Pope was happy, because he says so in his writings? We see in his writings what he wished the state of his mind to appear. Dr. Young, who pined for preferment, talks with contempt of it in his writings, and affects to despise every thing that he did not despise." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "He was like other chaplains, looking for vacancies; but that is not peculiar to the clergy. I remember, when I was with the army, after the battle of Lafeldt, the officers seriously

grumbled that no general was killed." CAMBRIDGE. "We may believe Horace more, when he says,—

> 'Romæ Tibur amem ventosus, Tibure Romam,'

than when he boasts of his consistency:—

> 'Me constare mihi scis, et discedere tristem,
> Quandocunque trahunt invisa negotia Romam.'"

BOSWELL. "How hard is it that man can never be at rest!" RAMSAY. "It is not in his nature to be at rest. When he is at rest, he is in the worst state that he can be in; for he has nothing to agitate him. He is then like the man in the Irish song(1)—

> 'There lived a young man in Ballinacrazy,
> Who wanted a wife for to make him unaisy.'"

Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson observed, that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged: that he once complained to him in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write any thing, the public *make a point* to know nothing about it:" but that his "Traveller(2)" brought him into high reputation. LANGTON. "There is not one bad line in that poem, not one of Dryden's careless verses." SIR JOSHUA. "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say, it was one of the finest poems in the English language." LANGTON. "Why were you glad? You surely had no doubt of this

(1) Called "Alley Croker." This lady, a celebrated beauty in her day, was the youngest daughter of Colonel Croker, of Ballinagard, in the county of Limerick. The lover whose rejection has immortalised her name is not known; but she married Charles Langley, Esq., of Lisnarnock. She died without issue, about the middle of the last century. — C.

(2) First published in 1765. — M.

before." JOHNSON. "No; the merit of 'The Traveller' is so well established, that Mr. Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it." SIR JOSHUA. "But his friends may suspect they had too great a partiality for him." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, the partiality of his friends was always against him. It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject; so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry, too, when catched in an absurdity; but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute. I remember Chamier, after talking with him some time, said, 'Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself; and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal.' Chamier once asked him, what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of 'The Traveller,'—

'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, Sir, you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed then that I had written the line, as much as if he had seen me write it.(1) Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other

(1) See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 309., as to the lines of this poem which Johnson wrote.—C.

man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey; and every year he lived would have deserved it better. He had, indeed, been at no pains to fill his mind with knowledge. He transplanted it from one place to another; and it did not settle in his mind; so he could not tell what was in his own books."

We talked of living in the country. JOHNSON. "No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance; if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields than to an opposite wall. (1) Then if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to keep him from walking in again; but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life; and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes." BOSWELL. "I fancy London is the best place for society; though I have heard that the very first society

(1) Mr. Cumberland was of a contrary opinion. "In the ensuing year I again paid a visit to my father at Clonfert; and there, in a little closet, at the back of the *palace*, as it was called, unfurnished, and out of use, with no other prospect from its single window but that of a turf-stack, with which it was almost in contact, I seated myself by choice, and began to plan and compose *The West Indian*. In all my hours of study, it has been through life my object so to locate myself as to have little or nothing to distract my attention, and, therefore, brilliant rooms or pleasant prospects I have ever avoided. A dead wall, or, as in the present case, an Irish turf-stack, are not attractions that can call off the fancy from its pursuits; and whilst in those pursuits it can find interest and occupation, it wants no outward aids to cheer it."—*Mem.* vol. i. p. 271. 277.—C.

of Paris is still beyond any thing that we have here." JOHNSON. "Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together: the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they know no more than the women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women." RAMSAY. "Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France: here it is rather *passée*." JOHNSON. "Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters: Italy had it first, to be sure. What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France? Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translated from the French; and Chaucer, we know, took much from the Italians. No, Sir, if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring; it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature; but we had it long after them. In England, any man who wears a sword and a powdered wig is ashamed to be illiterate. I believe it is not so in France. Yet there is, probably, a great deal of learning in France, because they have such a number of religious establishments; so many men who have nothing else to do but to study. I do not know this; but I take it upon the common principles of

chance. Where there are many shooters, some will hit."

We talked of old age. Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said, "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age."(1) The bishop asked, if an old man does not lose faster than he gets. JOHNSON. "I think not, my Lord, if he exerts himself." One of the company rashly observed, that he thought it was happy for an old man that insensibility comes upon him. JOHNSON (with a noble elevation and disdain).

(1) Hobbes was of the same opinion with Johnson on this subject, and, in his answer to D'Avenant's *Preface to Gondibert*, with great spirit, explodes the current opinion, that the mind in old age is subject to a necessary and irresistible debility. "And now, while I think on't," says the philosopher, "give me leave, with a short discord, to sweeten the harmony of the approaching close. I have nothing to object to your poem, but dissent only from something in your preface, sounding to the prejudice of age. It is commonly said, that old age is a return to childhood which methinks you insist on so long, as if you desired it should be believed. That is the note I mean to shake a little. That saying, meant only of the weakness of body, was wrested to the weakness of mind, by froward children, weary of the controlment of their parents, masters, and other admonitors. Secondly, the dotage and childishness they ascribe to age is never the effect of time, but sometimes of the excesses of youth, and not a returning to, but a continual stay with, childhood. For they that want the curiosity of furnishing their memories with the rarities of nature in their youth, and pass their time in making provision only for their ease and sensual delight, are children still, at what years soever; as they that coming into a populous city, never going out of their inn, are strangers still, how long soever they have been there. Thirdly, there is no reason for any man to think himself wiser to-day than yesterday, which does not equally convince he shall be wiser to-morrow than to-day. Fourthly, you will be forced to change your opinion hereafter, when you are old; and, in the meantime, you discredit all I have said before in your commendation, because I am old already.—But no more of this." Hobbes, when he wrote these pleasing and sensible remarks, was sixty-two years old, and D'Avenant forty-five.—M.

"No, Sir, I should never be happy by being less rational." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "Your wish then, Sir, is γηράσκειν διδασκόμενος." JOHNSON. "Yes, my Lord." His Lordship mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales, where people were maintained, and supplied with every thing, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labour; and, he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON. "They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port."

One of the company asked him the meaning of the expression in Juvenal, *unius lacertæ*. JOHNSON. "I think it clear enough; as much ground as one may have a chance to find a lizard upon."

Commentators have differed as to the exact meaning of the expression by which the poet intended to enforce the sentiment contained in the passage where these words occur. It is enough that they mean to denote even a very small possession, provided it be a man's own: —

> "Est aliquid, quocunque loco, quocunque recessu,
> Unius sese dominum fecisse lacertæ." (1)

This season there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to de-

(1) ["Poor Boswell was a man of infinite curiosity: it is a pity that he never heard of the ingenious conjecture of a Dutch critic, who would exchange *lacertæ* for *lacerti*, which he accurately translates *een handvol landis*, and still more accurately interprets, 'a piece of ground equal in extent to the space between the shoulder and the elbow' (of a middle-sized man, I presume; though the critic has inadvertently forgotten to mention it)." — GIFFORD, *Juvenal*, v. i. p. 194.]

scribe living persons well known in the world; which was done under the title of "Modern Characters from Shakspeare;" many of which were admirably adapted. The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters. "Yes," said he, "I have. I should have been sorry to have been left out." He then repeated what had been applied to him:—

"You must borrow me Garagantua's mouth."

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. "Why, Madam, it has a reference to me, as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them. Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there is another amongst them for you:—

'He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder.'"

JOHNSON. "There is nothing marked in that. No, Sir, Garagantua is the best." Notwithstanding this ease and good-humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick (vol. ii. p. 300.), which was received with applause, he asked, "*Who* said that?" and on my suddenly answering, —*Garagantua*, he looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up.

When we went to the drawing-room, there was a rich assemblage. Besides the company who had been at dinner, there were Mr. Garrick, Mr. Harris of

Salisbury, Dr. Percy, Dr. Burney, the Honourable Mrs. Cholmondeley,* Miss Hannah More, &c. &c.

After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner, with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. GARRICK (to Harris). "Pray, Sir, have you read Potter's Æschylus?" HARRIS. "Yes; and think it pretty." GARRICK (to Johnson). "And what think you, Sir, of it?" JOHNSON. "I thought what I read of it *verbiage*: but upon Mr. Harris's recommendation, I will read a play. (To Mr. Harris.) Don't prescribe two." Mr. Harris suggested one, I do not remember which. JOHNSON. "We must try its effect as an English poem; that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation. Translations are, in general, for people who cannot read the original." I mentioned the vulgar saying, that Pope's Homer was not a good representation of the original. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is the greatest work of the kind that has ever been produced." BOSWELL. "The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry. In a different language it may be the same tune, but it has not the same tone. Homer plays it on a bassoon: Pope on a flageolet." HARRIS. "I think heroic poetry is best in blank verse; yet it appears that rhyme is essential to English poetry, from our deficiency in metrical quantities. In my opinion, the chief excellence of our language is numerous prose." JOHNSON. "Sir William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose. (1)

(1) The author, in Vol. I. p. 258., says, that Johnson once told him, "that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William

Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word, or with what part of speech it was concluded." Mr. Langton, who now had joined us, commended Clarendon. JOHNSON. "He is objected to for his parentheses, his involved clauses, and his want of harmony. But he is supported by his matter. It is, indeed, owing to a plethory of matter that his style is so faulty: every *substance* (smiling to Mr. Harris) has so many *accidents*. — To be distinct, we must talk *analytically*. If we analyse language, we must speak of it grammatically; if we analyse argument, we must speak of it logically." GARRICK. "Of all the translations that ever were attempted, I

Temple, and upon Chambers's Proposal for his Dictionary. He certainly was mistaken; or, if he imagined, at first, that he was imitating Temple, he was very unsuccessful; for nothing can be more unlike than the simplicity of Temple and the richness of Johnson." This observation of our author, on the first view, seems perfectly just; but, on a closer examination, it will, I think, appear to have been founded on a misapprehension. Mr. Boswell understood Johnson too literally. He did not, I conceive, mean, that he endeavoured to imitate Temple's style in all its parts; but that he formed his style on him and Chambers (perhaps the paper published in 1737, relative to his second edition, entitled "Considerations," &c.), taking from each what was most worthy of imitation. The passage before us, I think, shows that he learned from Temple to modulate his periods, and, *in that respect only*, made him his pattern. In this view of the subject there is no difficulty. He might learn from Chambers compactness, strength, and precision (in opposition to the laxity of style which had long prevailed); from Sir Thomas Browne (who was certainly one of his archetypes), *pondera verborum*, vigour and energy of expression; and from Temple, harmonious arrangement, the due collocation of words, and the other arts and graces of composition here enumerated: and yet, after all, his style might bear no striking resemblance to that of any of these writers, though it had profited by each. — M.

think Elphinston's Martial the most extraordinary. (1) He consulted me upon it, who am a little of an epigrammatist myself, you know. I told him freely 'You don't seem to have that turn.' I asked him if he was serious; and finding he was, I advised him against publishing. Why, his translation is more difficult to understand than the original. I thought him a man of some talents; but he seems crazy in this." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have done what I had not courage to do. But he did not ask my advice, and I did not force it upon him, to make him angry with me." GARRICK. "But as a friend, Sir——" JOHNSON. "Why, such a friend as I am with him—no." GARRICK. "But if you see a friend going to tumble over a precipice?" JOHNSON. "That is an extravagant case, Sir. You are sure a friend will thank you for hindering him from tumbling over a precipice: but, in the other case, I should hurt his vanity, and do him no good. He would not take my advice. His brother-in-law, Strahan, sent him a subscription of fifty pounds, and said he would send him fifty more, if he would not publish." GARRICK. "What! eh! is Strahan a good judge of an epigram? Is not he rather an *obtuse* man, eh?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he may not be a judge of an epigram: but you see he is a judge of what is *not* an epigram." BOSWELL. "It is easy for you, Mr. Garrick, to talk to an author as you talked to Elphinston; you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays

(1) [See antè, Vol. I. p. 245. — C.]

of poor authors. You are an old judge, who have often pronounced sentence of death. You are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation are not very fond of seeing the operator again." GARRICK. "Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr. Hawkins), who wrote a tragedy, the SIEGE of something(1), which I refused." HARRIS. "So, the siege was raised." JOHNSON. "Ay, he came to me and complained; and told me, that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play?" (Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed; for Johnson told me, he believed the story was true.) GARRICK. "I—I—I—said, *first* concoction. (2) JOHNSON (smiling). "Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him *in false English*: he could show it under his hand." GARRICK. "He wrote to me in violent wrath, for having refused his play: 'Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible affair. I am resolved to publish my play. I will appeal to

(1) It was called "The Siege of Aleppo." Mr. Hawkins, the author of it, was formerly professor of poetry at Oxford. It is printed in his "Miscellanies," 3 vols. 8vo. — B. [The Mr. Hawkins, here so slightingly mentioned, is, nevertheless, introduced as one of the *great men* which Pembroke College produced. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 77. *n.*]

(2) Garrick had high authority for this expression. Dryden uses it in his preface to "Œdipus." — M. — And surely, "*concoction*" alone was as good as "*first* concoction," which latter phrase Johnson was willing to admit: but it appears from the letters in the Garrick Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 6., that Garrick really wrote "*first* concoction." — C.

the world; and how will your judgment appear? I answered, 'Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrors, I have no objection to your publishing your play: and, as you live at a great distance (Devonshire, I believe), if you will send it to me I will convey it to the press.'(1) I never heard more of it, ha! ha! ha!"

On Friday, April 10., I found Johnson at home in the morning. We resumed the conversation of yesterday. He put me in mind of some of it which had escaped my memory, and enabled me to record it more perfectly than I otherwise could have done. He was much pleased with my paying so great attention to his recommendation in 1763, the period when our acquaintance began, that I should keep a journal; and I could perceive he was secretly pleased to find so much of the fruit of his mind preserved; and as he had been used to imagine and say, that he always laboured when he said a

(1) Garrick a little embellishes the reply. He did *not* offer "to convey the play to the press," but in a long, contentious letter says, that he will "forgive Hawkins's publishing an appeal on the rejection of his plays, if he will publish the plays themselves;" and this was so far from silencing Hawkins, that he rejoined in a still more violent letter. The reader will, perhaps, not be sorry to see a *sketch* of this evening by another hand, more partial to Garrick. Hannah More writes, "I dined with the Garricks on Thursday; he went with me in the evening to Sir Joshua's, where I was engaged to pass the evening. I was not a little proud of being the means of bringing such a beau into such a party. We found Gibbon, Johnson, Hermes Harris, Burney, Chambers, Ramsay, the Bishop of St. Asaph, Boswell, Langton, &c., and scarce an expletive man or woman amongst them. *Garrick put Johnson into such good spirits*, that I never knew him so entertaining or more instructive. He was as brilliant as himself, and as good-humoured as any one else." — *More's Life*, vol. i. p. 146. How infinitely inferior are these generalities to the vivacious details of Boswell! — C.

good thing, — it delighted him, on a review, to find that his conversation teemed with point and imagery

I said to him, "You were, yesterday, Sir, in remarkably good humour; but there was nothing to offend you, nothing to produce irritation or violence. There was no bold offender. There was not one capital conviction. It was a maiden assize. You had on your white gloves."(1)

He found fault with our friend Langton for having been too silent. "Sir," said I, "you will recollect that he very properly took up Sir Joshua for being glad that Charles Fox had praised Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' and you joined him.' JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I knocked Fox on the head, without ceremony. Reynolds is too much under Fox and Burke at present. He is under the *Fox star*, and the *Irish constellation*. He is always under some planet." BOSWELL. "There is no Fox star." (2) JOHNSON. "But there is a dog star." BOSWELL. "They say, indeed, a fox and a dog are the same animal."

I reminded him of a gentleman who, Mrs. Cholmondeley said, was first talkative from affectation, and then silent from the same cause; that he first thought "I shall be celebrated as the liveliest man in every company;" and then, all at once, "O! it is much more respectable to be grave and look wise." "He has reversed the Pythagorean discipline, by being first talkative and then silent. H

(1) At an assize, where there has been no capital conviction, the judge receives a pair of white gloves. — C.

(2) There is a constellation called the *Fox*. — C.

reverses the course of nature too; he was first the gay butterfly and then the creeping worm." Johnson laughed loud and long at this expansion and illustration of what he himself had told me.

We dined together with Mr. Scott (now Sir William Scott, his majesty's advocate general), at his chambers in the Temple, nobody else there. The company being small, Johnson was not in such spirits as he had been the preceding day(1), and for a considerable time little was said. At last he burst forth:—"Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants: it is diminished in our colleges; nay, in our grammar-schools." BOSWELL. "What is the cause of this, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, the coming in of the Scotch," laughing sarcastically. BOSWELL. "That is to say, things have been turned topsy-turvy.—But your serious cause." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there are many causes, the chief of which is, I think, the great increase of money. No man now depends upon the lord of a manor, when he can send to another country and fetch provisions. The shoe-black at the entry of my court does not depend on me. I can deprive him but of a penny a day, which he hopes somebody else will bring him; and that penny I must

(1) Hannah More says, on the contrary, of a very small party at her lodgings, "Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly, one must have him to oneself, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties."—*Life*, vol. i. p. 64. sub an. 1776. But Boswell was the better judge in this matter.—C. 1835.

carry to another shoe-black, so the trade suffers nothing. I have explained in my 'Journey to the Hebrides,' how gold and silver destroy feudal subordination. But, besides, there is a general relaxation of reverence. No son now depends upon his father, as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims. That is, in general, reduced to very small bounds. My hope is, that as anarchy produces tyranny, this extreme relaxation will produce *freni strictio.*"

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, I observed, how little there is of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakspeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed; into what a narrow space will it go!" I then slily (1) introduced Mr. Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, Sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet.* Consider, Sir; celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance; but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his

(1) This slyness was not quite fair; and in justice to Johnson it should be observed, that though on this occasion no harm was done, Boswell often betrayed him by these arts into personal censures, which he would probably never otherwise have uttered, and which we know he sometimes regretted. — C. 1835.

ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium*. Then, Sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *made* his way to the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers of the great. Then, Sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of people; who, from fear of his power and hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character." SCOTT. "And he is a very sprightly writer too." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down every body that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they 'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us*" (smiling). BOSWELL. "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man." JOHNSON. "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed but he has shown, that money is not his first object."(1) BOSWELL. "Yet Foote used to say of him,

(1) Miss Hawkins says, "At Hampton, and in its neighbourhood, Mr. and Mrs. Garrick took the rank of the *noblesse* — every thing was in good taste, and his establishment distinguished — he drove four horses when going to town." She adds the following lively description of his personal appearance: "I see him now in a dark blue coat, the button-holes bound with gold, a small cocked hat laced with gold, his waistcoat very open, and his countenance never at rest, and, indeed, seldom his person; for, in the relaxation of the country, he gave way to all his natural volatility, and with my father was perfectly at ease, sometimes sitting on a table, and then, if he saw my brothers at a

that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action; but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a half-penny, which frightened him." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that is very true too; for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick; it depends so much on his humour at the time." SCOTT. "I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving." JOHNSON. "With his domestic saving we have nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong. (1) He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it." (2)

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it,

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distance on the lawn, shooting off like an arrow out of a bow in a spirited chase of them round the garden. I remember — when my father, having me in his hand, met him on the common, riding his pretty pony — his moving my compassion by lamenting the misery of being summoned to town in hot weather (I think August) to play before the King of Denmark. I thought him sincere, and his case pitiable, till my father assured me that he was in reality very well pleased, and that what he groaned at as labour, was an honour paid to his talents. The natural expression of his countenance was far from placidity. I confess I was afraid of him; more so than I was of Johnson whom I knew not to be, nor could suppose he ever would be thought to be, an extraordinary man. Garrick had a frown and spoke impetuously. Johnson was slow and kind in his way to children." — *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 21. — C.

(1) When Johnson told this little anecdote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he mentioned a circumstance which he omitted today: — "Why," said Garrick, "it is as red as blood."

(2) The generosity of David Garrick to the late Mr. Berenger (see Vol. III. p. 83.), who had fallen into distress by wit or by negligence, was as memorable. He sent him back his securities for 500*l.* with a donation of a bank note of 500*l.* — TYERS.

and the effects of that art which is called economy, he observed, "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly incomes, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear they have not value for what they spend. Lord Shelburne told me, that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore, a great proportion must go in waste; and indeed, this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is." BOSWELL. "I have no doubt, Sir, of this. But how is it? What is waste?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, breaking bottles, and a thousand other things. Waste cannot be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is. Economy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily cannot be defined. It is a very nice thing; as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how."

We talked of war. JOHNSON. "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of general officers and admirals who have been in service, he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No; he'd think he could *try* them all." JOHNSON. "Yes, if he could catch them: but

they'd try him much sooner. No, Sir; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy;' and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal; yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery; such crowding, such filth, such stench!" BOSWELL. "Yet sailors are happy." JOHNSON. "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat — with the grossest sensuality. But, Sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness." SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as part of a great machine." SCOTT. "We find people fond of being sailors." JOHNSON. "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination." His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent; but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier. And yet I have, in my large and various collection of his writings, a letter to an eminent friend, in which he expresses himself thus: —"My godson called on me lately. He is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life. If you can place him in some other state, I think you

may increase his happiness, and secure his virtue. A soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption." Such was his cool reflection in his study; but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown.

He talked of Mr. Charles Fox, of whose abilities he thought highly, but observed, that he did not talk much at our Club. I have heard Mr. Gibbon remark, "that Mr. Fox could not be afraid of Dr. Johnson; yet he certainly was very shy of saying any thing in Dr. Johnson's presence." Mr. Scott now quoted what was said of Alcibiades by a Greek poet, to which Johnson assented. (1)

He told us, that he had given Mrs. Montagu a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination; most, if not all of which, as well as of his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a tradesman, had written so variously and so well. Indeed, his "Robinson Crusoe" is enough of itself to establish his reputation.

He expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock-lane ghost, and related, with much satisfaction, how he had assisted in detecting the

(1) Dr. Kearney, Archdeacon of Raphoe, remarks, that "Mr. Boswell's memory must here have deceived him; and that Mr. Scott's observation must have been, that 'Mr. Fox, in the instance mentioned, might be considered as the *reverse of Phæax;*' of whom, as Plutarch relates in the Life of Alcibiades, Eupolis the tragedian said, It is true he can *talk*, and yet he is no *speaker*." — M.

cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers. Upon this subject I incautiously offended him, by pressing him with too many questions, and he showed his displeasure. I apologised, saying, that "I asked questions in order to be instructed and entertained; I repaired eagerly to the fountain; but that the moment he gave me a hint, the moment he put a lock upon the well, I desisted." "But, Sir," said he, "that is forcing one to do a disagreeable thing:" and he continued to rate me. "Nay, Sir," said I, "when you have put a lock upon the well, so that I can no longer drink, do not make the fountain of your wit play upon me and wet me."

He sometimes could not bear being teased with questions. I was once present when a gentleman (1) asked so many, as, "What did you do, Sir?" "What did you say, Sir?" that he at last grew enraged, and said, "I will not be put to the *question*. Don't you consider, Sir, that these are not the manners of a gentleman? I will not be baited with *what* and *why*; what is this? what is that? why is a cow's tail long? why is a fox's tail bushy?" The gentleman, who was a good deal out of countenance, said, "Why, Sir, you are so good, that I venture to trouble you." JOHNSON. "Sir, my being so *good* is no reason why you should be so *ill*."

Talking of the Justitia hulk at Woolwich, in which criminals were punished, by being confined to labour, he said, "I do not see that they are punished by this: they must have worked equally, had

(1) This was supposed to be Boswell himself. — C.

they never been guilty of stealing. They now only work; so, after all, they have gained; what they stole is clear gain to them; the confinement is nothing. Every man who works is confined: the smith to his shop, the tailor to his garret." BOSWELL. "And Lord Mansfield to his court." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. You know the notion of confinement may be extended, as in the song, 'Every island is a prison.' There is in Dodsley's collection a copy of verses to the author of that song. (1)

Smith's Latin verses on Pococke, the great traveller (2), were mentioned. He repeated some of them, and said they were Smith's best verses.

He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China. I catched it for the moment, and said I really believed I should go and see the wall of China had I not children, of whom it was my duty to take care. "Sir," said he, "by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in rais-

(1) I have in vain examined Dodsley's Collection for the verses here referred to. The song begins with the words, "Welcome, welcome, brother debtor." — M. — It is in Ritson's Collection, vol. ii. p. 105. — C.

(2) Smith's verses are on Edward Pococke, the great Oriental linguist: he travelled, it is true; but Dr. Richard Pococke, late Bishop of Ossory, who published Travels through the East, is usually called the *great traveller*. — KEARNEY. — Edward Pococke was Canon of Christchurch and Hebrew Professor in Oxford. The two Pocockes flourished just a century apart; the one, Edward, being born in 1604; Richard, in 1704. — HALL.

ing your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the wall of China. I am serious, Sir."

When we had left Mr. Scott's, he said, "Will you go home with me?" "Sir," said I, "it is late; but I'll go with you for three minutes." JOHNSON. "Or *four*." We went to Mrs. Williams's room, where we found Mr. Allen the printer, who was the landlord of his house in Bolt-court, a worthy, obliging man, and his very old acquaintance; and what was exceedingly amusing, though he was of a very diminutive size, he used, even in Johnson's presence, to imitate the stately periods and slow and solemn utterance of the great man. I this evening boasted, that although I did not write what is called stenography, or short-hand, in appropriated characters devised for the purpose, I had a method of my own of writing half-words, and leaving out some altogether, so as yet to keep the substance and language of any discourse which I had heard so much in view, that I could give it very completely soon after I had taken it down. He defied me, as he had once defied an actual short-hand writer; and he made the experiment by reading slowly and distinctly a part of Robertson's "History of America," while I endeavoured to write it in my way of taking notes. It was found that I had it very imperfectly; the conclusion (1) from which was, that its ex-

(1) This is odd reasoning. Most readers would have come to the more obvious conclusion, that Boswell had failed in his

cellence was principally owing to a studied arrangement of words, which could not be varied or abridged without an essential injury.

On Sunday, April 12., I found him at home before dinner; Dr. Dodd's poem, entitled "Thoughts in Prison," was lying upon his table. This appearing to me an extraordinary effort by a man who was in Newgate for a capital crime, I was desirous to hear Johnson's opinion of it: to my surprise, he told me he had not read a line of it. I took up the book and read a passage to him. JOHNSON. "Pretty well, if you are previously disposed to like them." I read another passage, with which he was better pleased. He then took the book into his own hands, and having looked at the prayer at the end of it, he said, "What *evidence* is there that this was composed the night before he suffered? *I* do not believe it." He then read aloud where he prays for the king, &c. and observed, "Sir, do you think that a man, the night before he is to be hanged, cares for the succession of a royal family? Though, he *may* have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life, may cant to the last. And yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the king."(1)

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experiment at short-hand. This passage may account for some verbal errors and obscurities in this work: when copying his notes, after a considerable lapse of time, Mr. Boswell probably misunderstood his own abbreviations. — C.

(1) It does not seem consistent that Johnson should have *thus* spoken of one, in the sincerity of whose repentance he had so

He, and I, and Mrs. Williams, went to dine with the Reverend Dr. Percy. Talking of Goldsmith, Johnson said, he was very envious. I defended him, by observing, that he owned it frankly upon all occasions. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are enforcing the charge. He had so much envy, that he could not conceal it. He was so full of it, that he overflowed. He talked of it, to be sure, often enough. Now, Sir, what a man avows, he is not ashamed to think; though many a man thinks what he is ashamed to avow. We are all envious naturally; but by checking envy, we get the better of it. So we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what it wants the nearest way: by good instruction and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it."

And here I shall record a scene of too much heat between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Percy, which I should have suppressed, were it not that it gave occasion to display the truly tender and benevolent heart of Johnson, who, as soon as he found a friend was at all hurt by any thing which he had "said in his wrath," was not only prompt and desirous to be re-

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much confidence as to desire to have the *benefit of his prayers* (*ante*, Vol. VI. p. 286.). The observation, too, on the prayer "for the king" seems inconsiderate; because, *if* Dodd was a sincere penitent, he would be anxious to reconcile himself with all mankind, and, as the king might have saved *his* life, yet would not, Dodd's prayer for him was probably neither form nor flattery (for what could *they* avail him at that hour?), but the proof of contrition, and of the absence of all personal resentment. — C.

conciled, but exerted himself to make ample reparation.

Books of travels having been mentioned, Johnson praised Pennant very highly, as he did at Dunvegan, in the Isle of Skye. Dr. Percy knowing himself to be the heir male of the ancient Percies (1), and having the warmest and most dutiful attachment to the noble house of Northumberland, could not sit quietly and hear a man praised, who had spoken disrespectfully of Alnwick Castle and the duke's pleasure-grounds, especially as he thought meanly of his travels. He therefore opposed Johnson eagerly. JOHNSON. "Pennant, in what he has said of Alnwick (2), has done what he intended; he has made you very angry." PERCY. "He has said the

(1) See this accurately stated, and the descent of his family from the Earls of Northumberland clearly deduced, in the Rev. Dr. Nash's excellent "History of Worcestershire," vol. ii. p. 318. The doctor has subjoined a note, in which he says, "The editor hath seen, and carefully examined the proofs of all the particulars above mentioned, now in the possession of the Rev. Thomas Percy." The same proofs I have also myself carefully examined, and have seen some additional proofs which have occurred since the doctor's book was published; and both as a lawyer accustomed to the consideration of evidence, and as a genealogist versed in the study of pedigrees, I am fully satisfied. I cannot help observing, as a circumstance of no small moment, that in tracing the Bishop of Dromore's genealogy, essential aid was given by the late Elizabeth Duchess of Northumberland, heiress of that illustrious house; a lady not only of high dignity of spirit, such as became her noble blood, but of excellent understanding and lively talents. With a fair pride I can boast of the honour of her grace's correspondence, specimens of which adorn my archives.

(2) ["At Alnwick no remains of chivalry are perceptible, no respectable train of attendants; the furniture and gardens inconsistent, and nothing, except the numbers of uninductrious poor at the castle gate, excited any one idea of its former circumstances." — *Tour in Scotland.*]

garden is trim, which is representing it like a citizen's parterre, when the truth is, there is a very large extent of fine turf and gravel walks." JOHNSON. "According to your own account, Sir, Pennant is right. It is trim. Here is grass cut close, and gravel rolled smooth. Is not that trim? The extent is nothing against that; a mile may be as trim as a square yard. Your extent puts me in mind of the citizen's enlarged dinner, two pieces of roast-beef, and two puddings. (1) There is no variety, no mind exerted in laying out the ground, no trees." PERCY. "He pretends to give the natural history of Northumberland, and yet takes no notice of the immense number of trees planted there of late." JOHNSON. "That, Sir, has nothing to do with the *natural* history; that is *civil* history. A man who gives the natural history of the oak, is not to tell how many oaks have been planted in this place or that. A man who gives the natural history of the cow, is not to tell how many cows are milked at Islington. The animal is the same whether milked in the Park or at Islington." PERCY. "Pen-

(1) It is observable that the same illustration of the same subject is to be found in the *Heroic Epistle* to Sir William Chambers: —

> "For what is nature? — ring her changes round,
> Her three flat notes are water, plants, and ground;
> Prolong the peal, yet, spite of all your clatter,
> The tedious chime is still ground, plants, and water.
> So when some *John* his dull invention racks
> To rival Boodle's dinners or Almack's,
> Three uncouth legs of mutton shock our eyes
> Three roasted geese, three butter'd apple pies."

The *Heroic Epistle* had appeared in 1773; so that Johnson no doubt borrowed the idea from that spirited and pungent satire — C.

nant does not describe well; a carrier who goes along the side of Lochlomond would describe it better." JOHNSON. "I think he describes very well." PERCY. "I travelled after him." JOHNSON. "And *I* travelled after him." PERCY. "But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do." I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said nothing at the time; but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON (pointedly). "This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland." PERCY (feeling the stroke). "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHNSON. "Hold, Sir!* Don't talk of rudeness: remember, Sir, you told me," puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent. "I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please." PERCY. "Upon my honour, Sir, I did not mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON. "I cannot say so, Sir; for I *did* mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." Dr. Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood; upon which a reconciliation instantly took place. JOHNSON. "My dear Sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant." PERCY (resuming the former subject). "Pennant complains that the helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality. Now I never heard that it was a custom to hang out a

helmet."(1) JOHNSON. "Hang him up, hang him up." BOSWELL (humouring the joke). "Hang out his skull instead of a helmet, and you may drink ale out of it in your hall of Odin, as he is your enemy; that will be truly ancient. *There* will be 'Northern Antiquities.'"(2) JOHNSON. "He's a *whig*, Sir; a *sad dog*," smiling at his own violent expressions, merely for *political* difference of opinion: "but he's the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than any one else does."

I could not help thinking that this was too high praise of a writer who traversed a wide extent of country in such haste, that he could put together only curt frittered fragments of his own, and afterwards procured supplemental intelligence from parochial ministers, and others not the best qualified or most partial narrators, whose ungenerous prejudice against the house of Stuart glares in misrepresentation; a writer, who at best treats merely of superficial objects, and shows no philosophical investigation of character and manners, such as Johnson has exhibited in his masterly "Journey" over part of the same ground; and who, it should seem from a desire of ingratiating himself with the Scotch, has flattered the people of North Britain so inordinately and with so little discrimination, that the

(1) It certainly was a custom, as appears from the following passage in "Perce-forest," vol. iii. p. 108.: — "Fasoient mettre au plus hault de leur hostel un *heaulme*, *en signe que* tous les gentils hommes et gentilles femmes entrassent hardiment en leur hostel comme en leur propre," &c. — KEARNEY.

(2) The title of a book translated by Dr. Percy.



judicious and candid amongst them must be disgusted, while they value more the plain, just, yet kindly report of Johnson.

Having impartially censured Mr. Pennant, as a traveller in Scotland, let me allow him, from authorities much better than mine, his deserved praise as an able zoologist; and let me also, from my own understanding and feelings, acknowledge the merit of his "London," which, though said to be not quite accurate in some particulars, is one of the most pleasing topographical performances that ever appeared in any language. Mr. Pennant, like his countrymen in general, has the true spirit of a *gentleman*. As a proof of it, I shall quote from his "London" the passage in which he speaks of my illustrious friend.

"I must by no means omit *Bolt Court*, the long residence of Dr. Samuel Johnson, a man of the strongest natural abilities, great learning, a most retentive memory, of the deepest and most unaffected piety and morality, mingled with those numerous weaknesses and prejudices, which his friends have kindly taken care to draw from their dread abode.(1) I brought on myself his transient anger, by observing that in his tour in Scotland, he once had long and woful experience of oats being the food of men in Scotland, as they were of horses in England. It was a national reflection unworthy of him, and I shot my bolt. In turn he gave

(1) This is the common cant against faithful biography. Does the worthy gentleman mean that I, who was taught discrimination of character by Johnson, should have omitted his frailties, and, in short, have bepraised him, as the worthy gentleman has bedaubed Scotland?

me a tender hug.(1) *Con amore* he also said of me, '*The dog is a Whig.*' (2) I admired the virtues of Lord Russell, and pitied his fall. I should have been a Whig at the Revolution. There have been periods since in which I should have been, what I now am, a moderate Tory, a supporter, as far as my little influence extends, of a well-poised balance between the crown and the people; but should the scale preponderate against the *salus populi*, that moment may it be said, '*The* dog's a *Whig!*'"

We had a calm after the storm, staid the evening and supped, and were pleasant and gay. But Dr. Percy told me he was very uneasy at what had passed, for there was a gentleman there who was acquainted with the Northumberland family, to whom he hoped to have appeared more respectable, by showing how intimate he was with Dr. Johnson, and who might now, on the contrary, go away with an opinion to his disadvantage. He begged I would mention this to Dr. Johnson, which I afterwards did. His observation upon it was, "This comes of *stratagem*; had he told me that he wished to appear to advantage before that gentleman, he should have been at the top of the house all the time." He spoke of Dr. Percy in the handsomest manner. "Then, Sir," said I, "may I be allowed to suggest a mode by which you may effectually counteract any unfavourable report of what passed?

(1) See Dr. Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands," p. [illegible]; see his Dictionary article, *oats*; and my "Voyage to the Hebrides," first edition. — PENNANT.

(2) See Mr. Boswell's Journal (*ante*, Vol. IV. p. 168). — PENNANT.

I will write a letter to you upon the subject of the unlucky contest of that day, and you will be kind enough to put in writing, as an answer to that letter, what you have now said, and as Lord Percy is to dine with us at General Paoli's soon, I will take an opportunity to read the correspondence in his lordship's presence." This friendly scheme was accordingly carried into execution without Dr. Percy's knowledge. Johnson's letter placed Dr. Percy's unquestionable merit in the fairest point of view, and I contrived that Lord Percy should hear the correspondence, by introducing it at General Paoli's as an instance of Dr. Johnson's kind disposition towards one in whom his lordship was interested. Thus every unfavourable impression was obviated that could possibly have been made on those by whom he wished most to be regarded. I breakfasted the day after with him, and informed him of my scheme, and its happy completion, for which he thanked me in the warmest terms, and was highly delighted with Dr. Johnson's letter in his praise, of which I gave him a copy. He said, "I would rather have this than degrees from all the universities in Europe. It will be for me, and my children, and grandchildren." Dr. Johnson having afterwards asked me if I had given him a copy of it, and being told I had, was offended, and insisted that I should get it back, which I did. As, however he did not desire me to destroy either the original or the copy, or forbid me to let it be seen, I think myself at liberty to apply to it his general declaration to me concerning his own letters, "That

he did not choose they should be published in his life-time; but had no objection to their appearing after his death." I shall therefore insert this kindly correspondence, having faithfully narrated the circumstances accompanying it.

LETTER 319. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"MY DEAR SIR, — I beg leave to address you in behalf of our friend Dr. Percy, who was much hurt by what you said to him that day we dined at his house (April 12.); when, in the course of the dispute as to Pennant's merit as a traveller, you told Percy that 'he had the resentment of a narrow mind against Pennant, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland.' Percy is sensible that you did not mean to injure him; but he is vexed to think that your behaviour to him on that occasion may be interpreted as a proof that he is despised by you, which I know is not the case. I have told him, that the charge of being narrow minded was only as to the particular point in question; and that he had the merit of being a martyr to his noble family.

"Earl Percy is to dine with General Paoli next Friday; and I should be sincerely glad to have it in my power to satisfy his lordship how well you think of Dr. Percy, who, I find, apprehends that your good opinion of him may be of very essential consequence; and who assures me that he has the highest respect and the warmest affection for you.

"I have only to add, that my suggesting this occasion for the exercise of your candour and generosity is altogether unknown to Dr. Percy, and proceeds from my good-will towards him, and my persuasion that you will be happy to do him an essential kindness. I am, more and more, my dear Sir, your most faithful and affectionate humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 320. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"April 23. 1778.

"SIR, — The debate between Dr. Percy and me is one of those foolish controversies which begin upon a question of which neither party cares how it is decided, and which is, nevertheless, continued to acrimony, by the vanity with which every man resists confutation. Dr. Percy's warmth proceeded from a cause which, perhaps, does him more honour than he could have derived from juster criticism. His abhorrence of Pennant proceeded from his opinion that Pennant had wantonly and indecently censured his patron. His anger made him resolve, that, for having been once wrong, he never should be right. Pennant has much in his notions that I do not like; but still I think him a very intelligent traveller. If Percy is really offended, I am sorry; for he is a man whom I never knew to offend any one. He is a man very willing to learn, and very able to teach; a man, out of whose company I never go without having learned something. It is sure that he vexes me sometimes, but I am afraid it is by making me feel my own ignorance. So much extension of mind, and so much minute accuracy of inquiry, if you survey your whole circle of acquaintance, you will find so scarce, if you find it at all, that you will value Percy by comparison. Lord Hailes is somewhat like him: but Lord Hailes does not, perhaps, go beyond him in research; and I do not know that he equals him in elegance. Percy's attention to poetry has given grace and splendour to his studies of antiquity. A mere antiquarian is a rugged being.

"Upon the whole, you see that what I might say in sport or petulance to him, is very consistent with full conviction of his merit. I am, dear Sir, your most, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 221. FROM MR. BOSWELL TO DR. PERCY.

"South Audley Street, April 25.

"DEAR SIR, — I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the subject of the *Pennantian* controversy; and have received from him an answer which will delight you. I read it yesterday to Dr. Robertson, at the Exhibition; and at dinner to Lord Percy, General Oglethorpe, &c. who dined with us at General Paoli's; who was also a witness to the high *testimony* to your honour.

"General Paoli desires the favour of your company next Tuesday to dinner, to meet Dr. Johnson. If I can, I will call on you to-day. I am, with sincere regard, your most obedient humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL."(1)

(1) Though the Bishop of Dromore kindly answered the letters which I wrote to him, relative to Dr. Johnson's early history; yet, in justice to him, I think it proper to add, that the account of the foregoing conversation, and the subsequent transaction, as well as of some other conversations in which he is mentioned, has been given to the public without previous communication with his lordship.

CHAPTER IV.

1778.

"Chapter concerning Snakes."—Styles in Painting and Writing. — George Steevens. — Luxury. — Different Governments.— Maccaronic Verses.— Cookery Books — Inequality of the Sexes. — Degrees of Happiness —Soame Jenyns's "Internal Evidence."— Courage —Friendship.— Free Will.—Mandeville.—"Private Vices public Benefits." — Hannah More. — Mason's Prosecution of Mr. Murray the Bookseller.—Fear of Death. — Annihilation.— Future State of Existence —Wesley's Ghost Story.— Jane Harry.— Change of Religion. — Mrs. Knowles.

On Monday, April 13., I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's, where were Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, afterwards of London, and Dr. Stinton.(1) He was at first in a very silent mood. Before dinner he said nothing but "Pretty baby," to one of the children. Langton said very well to me afterwards, that he could repeat Dr. Johnson's conversation before dinner, as Johnson had said that he could repeat a complete chapter of "The Natural History of Iceland," from the Danish of *Horrebow*, the whole of which was exactly thus: —

(1) Dr. Stinton had been Dr. Porteus's fellow chaplain to Archbishop Secker, and was his colleague in the publication of their patron's works. — C.

"Chap. LXXII. — *Concerning Snakes.*

"There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole island."

At dinner we talked of another mode in the newspapers of giving modern characters in sentences from the classics, and of the passage —

> "Parcus deorum cultor, et infrequens,
> Insanientis dum sapientiæ
> Consultus erro, nunc retrorsùm
> Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
> Cogor relictos," (1)

being well applied to Soame Jenyns; who, after having wandered in the wilds of infidelity, had returned to the Christian faith. Mr. Langton asked Johnson as to the propriety of *sapientiæ consultus*. JOHNSON. "Though *consultus* was primarily an adjective, like *amicus* it came to be used as a substantive. So we have *Juris consultus*, a consult in law."

We talked of the styles of different painters, and how certainly a connoisseur could distinguish them. I asked if there was as clear a difference of styles in language as in painting, or even as in hand-writing, so that the composition of every individual may be distinguished? JOHNSON. "Yes. Those who have a style of eminent excellence, such as Dryden and Milton, can always be distinguished." I had no

(1) ["A fugitive from heaven and prayer,
I mock'd at all religious fear,
Deep scienc'd in the mazy lore
Of mad philosophy; but now
Hoist sail, and back my voyage plow
To that blest harbour which I left before." FRANCIS.]

doubt of this; but what I wanted to know was, whether there was really a peculiar style to every man whatever, as there is certainly a peculiar handwriting, a peculiar countenance, not widely different in many, yet always enough to be distinctive: —

> "———— facies non omnibus una,
> Nec diversa tamen.'

The bishop thought not; and said, he supposed that many pieces in Dodsley's collection of poems, though all very pretty, had nothing appropriated in their style, and in that particular could not be at all distinguished. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I think every man whatever has a peculiar style, which may be discovered by nice examination and comparison with others: but a man must write a great deal to make his style obviously discernible. As logicians say, this appropriation of style is infinite *in potestate*, limited *in actu*."

Mr. Topham Beauclerk came in the evening, and he and Dr. Johnson and I staid to supper. It was mentioned that Dr. Dodd (1) had once wished to be

(1) Miss Reynolds and Sir J. Hawkins doubted whether Johnson had ever been in Dodd's company; but Johnson told Boswell (*antè*, Vol. VI. p. 276.) that "he had once been." I have now before me a letter, dated in 1750, from Dr. Dodd to his friend the Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, the lexicographer, mentioning this meeting; and his account, at that day, of the man with whom he was afterward to have so painful a correspondence, is interesting and curious: —

"I spent yesterday afternoon with Johnson, the celebrated author of *The Rambler*, who is of all others the oddest and most peculiar fellow I ever saw. He is six feet high, has a violent convulsion in his head, and his eyes are distorted. He speaks roughly and loud, listens to no man's opinions, thoroughly pertinacious of his own. Good sense flows from him in all he utters, and he seems possessed of a prodigious fund of knowledge, which he is not at all reserved in communicating; but in a manner so obstinate, ungenteel, and boorish, as renders it disagreeable and dissatisfactory. In short, it is impossible for words to describe him. He seems often inattentive

a member of the LITERARY CLUB. JOHNSON. "I should be sorry if any of our Club were hanged. I will not say but some of them deserve it."(1) BEAUCLERK (supposing this to be aimed at persons (2) for whom he had at that time a wonderful fancy, which, however, did not last long) was irritated, and eagerly said, "You, Sir, have a friend (3) (naming him) who deserves to be hanged; for he speaks behind their backs against those with whom he lives on the best terms, and attacks them in the newspapers. *He* certainly ought to be *kicked*." JOHNSON. "Sir, we all do this in some degree: '*Veniam petimus damusque vicissim.*' To be sure it may be done so much, that a man may deserve to be kicked." BEAUCLERK. "He is very malignant." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not malignant. He is mischievous, if you will. He would do no man an essential injury; he may, indeed, love to make sport of people by vexing their vanity. I, however, once knew an old gentleman who was absolutely malignant. He really wished evil to others, and rejoiced at it." BOSWELL. "The gentleman, Mr.

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tive to what passes in company, and then looks like a person possessed by some superior spirit. I have been reflecting on him ever since I saw him. He is a man of most universal and surprising genius, but in himself particular beyond expression." — C.

(1) See note, Vol. VI. p. 235.

(2) Probably Mr. Fox, Lord Spenser, Mr. Burke, and some other Whigs, the violence of whose opposition at this time seemed to Johnson little short of abetting rebellion, for which they "deserved to be hanged." — C.

(3) No doubt George Steevens (now Johnson's colleague in editing Shakspeare), to whom such practices were imputed, and particularly as against Garrick and Mr. Arthur Murphy. — *Miss Hawk. Mem.* i. 99. — C.

Beauclerk, against whom you are so violent, is, I know, a man of good principles." BEAUCLERK. "Then he does not wear them out in practice."

Dr. Johnson, who, as I have observed before, delighted in discrimination of character, and having a masterly knowledge of human nature, was willing to take men as they are, imperfect, and with a mixture of good and bad qualities, I suppose thought he had said enough in defence of his friend, of whose merits, notwithstanding his exceptionable points, he had a just value: and added no more on the subject.

On Tuesday, April 14., I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with General Paoli and Mr. Langton. General Oglethorpe declaimed against luxury. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be. Men always take the best they can get." OGLETHORPE. "But the best depends much upon ourselves; and if we can be as well satisfied with plain things, we are in the wrong to accustom our palates to what is high seasoned and expensive. What says Addison in his 'Cato,' speaking of the Numidian?

> 'Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chase;
> Amid the running stream he slakes his thirst,
> Toils all the day, and at the approach of night,
> On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
> Or rests his head upon a rock till morn;
> And if the following day he chance to find
> A new repast, or an untasted spring,
> Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.'

Let us have *that* kind of luxury, Sir, if you will." JOHNSON. "But hold, Sir; to be merely satisfied

is not enough. It is in refinement and elegance that the civilised man differs from the savage. A great part of our industry, and all our ingenuity, is exercised in procuring pleasure; and, Sir, a hungry man has not the same pleasure in eating a plain dinner, that a hungry man has in eating a luxurious dinner. You see I put the case fairly. A hungry man may have as much, nay, more pleasure in eating a plain dinner, than a man grown fastidious has in eating a luxurious dinner. But I suppose the man who decides between the two dinners to be equally a hungry man."

Talking of the different governments,—JOHNSON. "The more contracted power is, the more easily it is destroyed. A country governed by a despot is an inverted cone. Government there cannot be so firm as when it rests upon a broad basis gradually contracted, as the government of Great Britain, which is founded on the parliament, then is in the privy council, then in the king." BOSWELL. "Power, when contracted into the person of a despot, may be easily destroyed, as the prince may be cut off. So Caligula wished that the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut them off at a blow." OGLETHORPE. "It was of the senate he wished that. (1) The senate by its usurpation controlled both the emperor and the people. And don't you think that we see too much of that in our own parliament?"

(1) Boswell was right, and Oglethorpe wrong; the exclamation in Suetonius is, "Utinam *populus* Romanus unam cervicem haberet." *Calig.* xxx. — C.

Dr. Johnson endeavoured to trace the etymology of Maccaronic verses, which he thought were of Italian invention, from Maccaroni; but on being informed that this would infer that they were the most common and easy verses, maccaroni being the most ordinary and simple food, he was at a loss; for he said, "He rather should have supposed it to import in its primitive signification, a composition of several things; [1] for Maccaronic verses are verses made out of a mixture of different languages, that is, of one language with the termination of another." I suppose we scarcely know of a language in any country, where there is any learning, in which that motley ludicrous species of composition may not be found. It is particularly droll in Low Dutch. The "*Polemo-middinia*" of Drummond, of Hawthornden, in which there is a jumble of many languages moulded, as if it were all in Latin, is well known. Mr. Langton made us laugh heartily at one in the Grecian mould, by Joshua Barnes, in which are to be found such comical *Anglo-hellenisms* as κλυββοισιν ἐβανχθεν: they were banged with clubs.

On Wednesday, April 15., I dined with Dr. Johnson at Mr. Dilly's, and was in high spirits, for I had been a good part of the morning with Mr. Orme,

(1) Dr. Johnson was right in supposing that this kind of poetry derived its name from *maccherone*. "Ars ista poetica (says Merlin Coccaie, whose true name was Theophilo Folengo) nuncupatur ars macaronica, a *macaronibus* derivata; qui *macarones* sunt quoddam pulmentum, farina, caseo, butyro compaginatum, grossum, rude, et rusticanum. Ideo macaronica nil nisi grossedinem, ruditatem, et vocabularzos debet in se continere." Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet. ii. 357. Folengo's assumed name was taken up in consequence of his having been instructed in his youth by Virago Coccaio. He died in 1544. — M.

the able and eloquent historian of Hindostan, who expressed a great admiration of Johnson. "I do not care," said he, "on what subject Johnson talks; but I love better to hear him talk than any body. He either gives you new thoughts, or a new colouring. It is a shame to the nation that he has not been more liberally rewarded. Had I been George the Third, and thought as he did about America, I would have given Johnson three hundred a year for his 'Taxation no Tyranny,' alone." I repeated this, and Johnson was much pleased with such praise from such a man as Orme.

At Mr. Dilly's to-day were Mrs. Knowles [1], the ingenious quaker lady, Miss Seward the poetess of Lichfield, the Reverend Dr. Mayo, and the Rev. Mr. Beresford, tutor to the Duke of Bedford. Before dinner Dr. Johnson seized upon Mr. Charles Sheridan's [2] "Account of the late Revolution in Sweden," and seemed to read it ravenously, as if he devoured it, which was to all appearance his method of studying. "He knows how to read better than any one," says Mrs. Knowles; "he gets at the substance of a book directly; he tears out the heart of it." He kept it wrapt up in the tablecloth in his lap during the time of dinner, from an avidity to have one entertainment in readiness, when he should have finished another; resembling (if I may use so coarse a simile) a dog who holds a bone in his paws

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 198. — C.

(2) The elder brother of Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He died in 1806. — M.

in reserve, while he eats something else which has been thrown to him.

The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that "he always found a good dinner," he said, "I could write a better book of cookery than has ever yet been written; it should be a book upon philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery may be made so too. A prescription which is now compounded of five ingredients, had formerly fifty in it. So in cookery, if the nature of the ingredients be well known, much fewer will do. Then, as you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher's meat, the best beef, the best pieces; how to choose young fowls; the proper seasons of different vegetables; and then how to roast and boil and compound." DILLY. "Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the *trade* (1) know this." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, this shows how much better the subject of cookery may be treated by a philosopher. I doubt if the book be written by Dr. Hill; for, in Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which I have looked into, salt-petre and sal-prunella are spoken of as different substances, whereas sal-prunella is only salt-petre burnt on charcoal; and Hill could not be ignorant of this. However, as the greatest part of such a book is made by transcrip-

(1) As physicians are called *the faculty*, and counsellors at law *the profession*, the booksellers of London are denominated *the trade*. Johnson disapproved of these denominations.

tion, this mistake may have been carelessly adopted. But you shall see what a book of cookery I shall make: I shall agree with Mr. Dilly for the copy-right." MISS SEWARD. "That would be Hercules with the distaff indeed." JOHNSON. "No, Madam. Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of cookery."

JOHNSON. "O! Mr. Dilly — you must know that an English Benedictine monk (1) at Paris has translated 'The Duke of Berwick's Memoirs,' from the original French, and has sent them to me to sell. I offered them to Strahan, who sent them back with this answer; — 'That the first book he had published was the Duke of Berwick's Life, by which he had lost: and he hated the name.' Now I honestly tell you that Strahan has refused them; but I also honestly tell you that he did it upon no principle for he never looked into them." DILLY. "Are they well translated, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, very well; in a style very current and clear. I have written to the Benedictine to give me an answer upon two points. What evidence is there that the letters are authentic? (for if they are not authentic, they are nothing.) And how long will it be before the original French is published? For if the French edition is not to appear for a considerable time, the translation will be almost as valuable as an original book. They will make two volumes in octavo; and I have undertaken to correct every sheet as it comes from the press." Mr. Dilly desired to see them, and

(1) The Abbé Hook. They were published, in 1779, by Cadell. — MACKINTOSH.

said he would send for them. He asked Dr. Johnson if he would write a preface to them. JOHNSON "No, Sir. The Benedictines were very kind to me, and I'll do what I undertook to do; but I will not mingle my name with them. I am to gain nothing by them. I'll turn them loose upon the world, and let them take their chance." DR. MAYO. "Pray, Sir, are Ganganelli's letters authentic?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. Voltaire put the same question to the editor of them (1) that I did to Macpherson — Where are the originals?"

Mrs. Knowles affected to complain that men had much more liberty allowed them than women. JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, women have all the liberty they should wish to have. We have all the labour and the danger, and the women all the advantage. We go to sea, we build houses, we do every thing, in short, to pay our court to the women." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Doctor reasons very wittily, but not convincingly. Now, take the instance of building: the mason's wife, if she is ever seen in liquor, is ruined: the mason may get himself drunk as often as he pleases, with little loss of character; nay, may let his wife and children starve." JOHNSON. "Madam, you must consider, if the mason does get himself drunk, and let his wife and children starve, the parish will oblige him to find security for their maintenance. We have different modes of restraining evil. Stocks for the men, a ducking-stool for women, and a pound for beasts. If we require

(1) [The Marquis Caraccioli — generally supposed to have been the fabricator of these celebrated letters.]

more perfection from women than from ourselves, it is doing them honour. And women have not the same temptations that we have; they may always live in virtuous company; men must mix in the world indiscriminately. If a woman has no inclination to do what is wrong, being secured from it is no restraint to her. I am at liberty to walk into the Thames; but if I were to try it, my friends would restrain me in Bedlam, and I should be obliged to them." MRS. KNOWLES. "Still, Doctor, I cannot help thinking it a hardship that more indulgence is allowed to men than to women. It gives a superiority to men, to which I do not see how they are entitled." JOHNSON. "It is plain, Madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakspeare says, 'If two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind.'" DILLY. "I suppose, Sir, Mrs. Knowles would have them ride in panniers, one on each side." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, the horse would throw them both." MRS. KNOWLES. "Well, I hope that in another world the sexes will be equal." BOSWELL. "That is being too ambitious, Madam. *We* might as well desire to be equal with the angels. We shall all, I hope, be happy in a future state, but we must not expect to be all happy in the same degree. It is enough, if we be happy according to our several capacities. A worthy carman will get to heaven as well as Sir Isaac Newton. Yet, though equally good, they will not have the same degrees of happiness." JOHNSON. "Probably not." (1)

(1) See on this question, Bishop Hall's Epistles, dec. iii. epist. 6.—"Of the different degrees of heavenly glory, and of

Upon this subject I had once before sounded him by mentioning the late Reverend Mr. Brown of Utrecht's image; that a great and small glass, though equally full, did not hold an equal quantity; which he threw out to refute David Hume's saying, that a little miss, going to dance at a ball, in a fine new dress, was as happy as a great orator, after having made an eloquent and applauded speech. After some thought, Johnson said, "I come over to the parson." As an instance of coincidence of thinking, Mr. Dilly told told me, that Dr. King, a late dissenting minister in London, said to him, upon the happiness in a future state of good men of different capacities, "A pail does not hold so much as a tub; but, if it be equally full, it has no reason to complain. Every saint in heaven will have as much happiness as he can hold." Mr. Dilly thought this a clear, though a familiar, illustration of the phrase, "One star differeth from another in brightness." (1 Cor. xv. 41.)

Dr. Mayo having asked Johnson's opinion of Soame Jenyns's "View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion" — JOHNSON. "I think it a pretty book; not very theological, indeed; and there seems to be an affectation of ease and carelessness, as if it were not suitable to his character to be very serious about the matter." BOSWELL. "He may have intended this to introduce his book the better among genteel people, who might be un-

our mutual knowledge of each other above;" and vol. ii. p. 7., where also this subject is discussed. — M.

willing to read too grave a treatise. There is a general levity in the age. We have physicians now with bag-wigs; may we not have airy divines, at least somewhat less solemn in their appearance than they used to be?" JOHNSON. "Jenyns might mean as you say." BOSWELL. "*You* should like his book, Mrs. Knowles, as it maintains, as you *friends* do, that courage is not a Christian virtue." MRS. KNOWLES. "Yes, indeed, I like him there; but I cannot agree with him that friendship is not a Christian virtue." JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, strictly speaking, he is right. All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend to the neglect, or, perhaps, against the interest, of others; so that an old Greek said, 'He that has *friends* has no *friend*.' (1) Now, Christianity recommends universal benevolence; to consider all men as our brethren; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, Madam, your sect must approve of this; for you call all men *friends*." MRS. KNOWLES. "We are commanded to do good to all men, 'but especially to them who are of the household of faith.'" JOHNSON. "Well, Madam; the household of faith is wide enough." MRS. KNOWLES. "But, Doctor, our Saviour had twelve apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'" JOHNSON (with eyes sparkling benignantly). "Very well indeed, Madam. You have said very well." BOSWELL. "A

(1) Ὦ φίλοι, οὐ φίλος — a phrase frequently quoted by Dr. John—C.

fine application. Pray, Sir, had you ever thought of it?" JOHNSON. "I had not, Sir."

From this pleasing subject, he, I know not how or why, made a sudden transition to one upon which he was a violent aggressor; for he said, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*;" and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter;" calling them "rascals, robbers, pirates," and exclaiming, he'd "burn and destroy them." Miss Seward, looking to him with mild but steady astonishment, said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured." He was irritated still more by this delicate and keen reproach; and roared out another tremendous volley, which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantic. During this tempest I sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his heat of temper, till, by degrees, I diverted his attention to other topics.

DR. MAYO (to Dr. Johnson). "Pray, Sir, have you read Edwards, of New-England, on Grace?"(1)

(1) Dr. Mayo, no doubt, meant, "A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern prevailing Notions that Freedom of Will is essential to Moral Agency," by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey. Of this work, Sir James Mackintosh (who so kindly assisted me in my edition of Boswell, and whose loss the literary and political world now lament) observes, in his autobiography: "Robert Hall's society and conversation had a great influence on my mind. He led me to the perusal of Jonathan Edwards's work on Free Will, which Dr. Priestley had pointed out before. I am sorry that I never yet read the other works of that most extraordinary man, who, in a metaphysical age or country, would certainly have been deemed as much the boast of America as his great countryman Franklin." — *Mem. of Mackintosh*, v. i. p 14. — C 1835.

JOHNSON. "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it." MAYO. "But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity." BOSWELL. "Alas! Sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity." JOHNSON. "You are surer that you are free, than you are of prescience; you are surer that you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to-night or not: that does not prevent my freedom." BOSWELL. "That it is certain you are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom: because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if *one* of these events be certain *now*, you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you must go home." JOHNSON. "If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty.(1) Bos-

(1) This seems a very loose report. Dr. Johnson never could have talked of "God's having *probability* increased to *certainty*."

WELL. "When it is increased to *certainty*, freedom ceases, because that cannot be certainly foreknown which is not certain at the time; but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent upon the exercise of will or any thing else." JOHNSON. "All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it." I did not push the subject any farther. I was glad to find him so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, involved with theological tenets which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed. (1)

He, as usual, defended luxury: "You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do more good to them by spending it in luxury; you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle. I own, indeed, there may be more virtue in giving it immediately in charity, than in spending it in luxury; though there may be pride in that too." Miss Seward asked, if this was not Mandeville's doctrine of

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To the Eternal and Infinite Creator there can be neither *probability* nor *futurity*. The action which is *future* to mortals is only a point of eternity in the eye of the ALMIGHTY, and it and all the motives that led to it are and were from all eternity *present* to HIM. Our bounded intellects cannot comprehend the *prescience* of the Deity; but if that attribute be conceded, there seems no difficulty in reconciling it with our own *free agency*; for God *has* already *seen* what man *will choose* to do. — C.

(1) If any of my readers are disturbed by this thorny question, I beg leave to recommend to them Letter 69. of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persannes*, and the late Mr. John Palmer of Islington's Answer to Dr. Priestley's mechanical arguments for what he absurdly calls "philosophical necessity."

"private vices, public benefits." JOHNSON. "The fallacy of that book is, that Mandeville defines neither vices nor benefits. He reckons among vices every thing that gives pleasure. He takes the narrowest system of morality, monastic morality, which holds pleasure itself to be a vice, such as eating salt with our fish, because it makes it eat better; and he reckons wealth as a public benefit, which is by no means always true. Pleasure of itself is not a vice. Having a garden, which we all know to be perfectly innocent, is a great pleasure. At the same time, in this state of being there are many pleasures vices, which, however, are so immediately agreeable that we can hardly abstain from them. The happiness of heaven will be, that pleasure and virtue will be perfectly consistent. Mandeville puts the case of a man who gets drunk at an alehouse; and says it is a public benefit, because so much money is got by it to the public. But it must be considered, that all the good gained by this, through the gradation of alehouse-keeper, brewer, maltster, and farmer, is overbalanced by the evil caused to the man and his family by his getting drunk. This is the way to try what is vicious, by ascertaining whether more evil than good is produced by it upon the whole, which is the case in all vice. It may happen that good is produced by vice, but not as vice; for instance, a robber may take money from its owner, and give it to one who will make a better use of it. Here is good produced; but not by the robbery as robbery, but as translation of property. I read Mandeville forty or, I believe,

fifty years ago.([1]) He did not puzzle me; he opened my views into real life very much. No, it is clear that the happiness of society depends on virtue. In Sparta, theft was allowed by general consent; theft, therefore, was *there* not a crime; but then there was no security; and what a life must they have had, when there was no security! Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth, that we are almost afraid to trust to our ears: but how should we be, if falsehood were multipled ten times! Society is held together by communication and information; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Brown's, 'Do the devils lie? No; for then hell could not subsist.'"

Talking of Miss —— ([2]), a literary lady, he said, "I was obliged to speak to Miss Reynolds, to let her know that I desired she would not flatter me so much." Somebody now observed, "She flatters Garrick." JOHNSON. "She is in the right to flatter Garrick. She is in the right for two reasons; first, because she has the world with her, who have been praising Garrick these thirty years; and, secondly, because she is rewarded for it by Garrick. ([3]) Why

(1) See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 100. — C.

(2) Hannah More. — *Malone MS.* — C.

(3) Johnson probably means either that Garrick repaid her in her own coin, or helped her in bringing out her play; or, finally, by introducing her into general society. It is not to be wondered at that an inexperienced young lady, suddenly transported from obscure provincial life into the elegance and splendour of the best literary circles of London, should have at first indulged in some extravagant admiration both of Johnson and Garrick; but it appears from her letters, that her admiration was at least

should she flatter me? I can do nothing for her. Let her carry her praise to a better market." Then turning to Mrs. Knowles, "You, Madam, have been flattering me all the evening; I wish you would give Boswell a little now. If you knew his merit as well as I do, you would say a great deal: he is the best travelling companion in the world."

Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr. Mason's prosecution of Mr. Murray, the bookseller (1), for having inserted in a collection of "Gray's Poems" only fifty lines, of which Mr. Mason had still the exclusive property, under the statute of Queen Anne; and that Mr. Mason had persevered, notwithstanding his being requested to name his own terms of compensation. (2) Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly; but added, by way of showing that he was not surprised at it, "Mason 's a Whig." Mrs. Knowles (not hearing distinctly). "What! a prig, Sir?" Johnson. "Worse, Madam; a Whig! But he is both!"

I expressed a horror at the thought of death. Mrs. Knowles. "Nay, thou shouldst not have a horror for what is the gate of life." Johnson

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sincere, and that for Johnson she entertained and expressed it before she ever saw him, and when she could not expect him to hear of it again. — C. 1835.

(1) Mr. Murray was a spirited and intelligent bookseller, the father of the publisher of this work. — C.

(2) See "A Letter to W. Mason, A. M., from J. Murray, Bookseller in London," second edition, p. [illegible].

(standing upon the hearth, rolling about, with a serious, solemn, and somewhat gloomy air). "No rational man can die without uneasy apprehension." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Scriptures tell us, 'The righteous shall have *hope* in his death.'" JOHNSON. "Yes, Madam, that is, he shall not have despair. But, consider, his hope of salvation must be founded on the terms on which it is promised that the mediation of our Saviour shall be applied to us,—namely, obedience; and where obedience has failed, then, as suppletory to it, repentance. But what man can say that his obedience has been such as he would approve of in another, or even in himself, upon close examination, or that his repentance has not been such as to require being repented of? No man can be sure that his obedience and repentance will obtain salvation." MRS. KNOWLES. "But divine intimation of acceptance may be made to the soul." JOHNSON. "Madam, it may; but I should not think the better of a man who should tell me on his death-bed, he was sure of salvation. A man cannot be sure himself that he has divine intimation of acceptance: much less can he make others sure that he has it." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, we must be contented to acknowledge that death is a terrible thing." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. I have made no approaches to a state which can look on it as not terrible." MRS. KNOWLES (seeming to enjoy a pleasing serenity in the persuasion of benignant divine light). "Does not St. Paul say, 'I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my

course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of life?'" JOHNSON. "Yes, Madam; but here was a man inspired, a man who had been converted by supernatural interposition." BOSWELL. "In prospect death is dreadful; but in fact we find that people die easy." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, most people have not *thought* much of the matter, so cannot *say* much, and it is supposed they die easy. Few believe it certain they are then to die; and those who do set themselves to behave with resolution(1), as a man does who is going to be hanged; — he is not the less unwilling to be hanged." MISS SEWARD. "There is one mode of the fear of death, which is certainly absurd; and that is the dread of annihilation, which is only a pleasing sleep without a dream." JOHNSON. "It is neither pleasing nor sleep; it is nothing. Now, mere existence is so much better than nothing, that one would rather exist even in pain, than not exist." BOSWELL. "If annihilation be nothing, then existing in pain is not a comparative state, but is a positive evil, which I cannot think we should choose. I must be allowed to differ here, and it would lessen the hope of a future state founded on the argument, that the Supreme Being, who is good as he is great, will hereafter compensate for our present sufferings in this life. For if existence, such as we have it here, be comparatively a good, we have no reason to

(1) See anté, Vol. VI. p. 294, where Paoli assumes that they are thinking of something else, — a very unsatisfactory explanation. — C.

complain, though no more of it should be given to us. But if our only state of existence were in this world, then we might with some reason complain that we are so dissatisfied with our enjoyments compared with our desires." JOHNSON. "The lady confounds annihilation, which is nothing, with the apprehension of it, which is dreadful. It is in the apprehension of it that the horror of annihilation consists."

Of John Wesley he said, "He can talk well on any subject." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, what has he made of his story of a ghost?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he believes it; but not on sufficient authority. He did not take time enough to examine the girl. It was at Newcastle where the ghost was said to have appeared to a young woman several times, mentioning something about the right to an old house; advising application to be made to an attorney, which was done; and at the same time, saying the attorney would do nothing, which proved to be the fact. 'This,' says John, 'is a proof that a ghost knows our thoughts.' Now" (laughing), "it is not necessary to know our thoughts, to tell that an attorney will sometimes do nothing. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to enquire into the evidence for it." MISS SEWARD (with an incredulous smile). "What Sir! about a ghost!" JOHNSON (with solemn vehemence). "Yes, Madam; this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided;

a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."

Mrs. Knowles mentioned, as a proselyte to Quakerism, Miss —— ———— (1), a young lady well known to Dr. Johnson, for whom he had shown much affection; while she ever had, and still retained, a great respect for him. Mrs. Knowles at the same time took an opportunity of letting him know "that the amiable young creature was sorry at finding that he was offended at her leaving the Church of England, and embracing a simpler faith;" and, in the gentlest and most persuasive manner, solicited his kind indulgence for what was sincerely a matter of conscience. JOHNSON (frowning very angrily). "Madam, she is an odious wench. She could not have any proper conviction that it was her duty to change her religion, which is the most important of all subjects, and should be studied with all care, and with all the helps we can get.

(1) Jane Harry. She was the illegitimate daughter, by a mulatto woman, of what Miss Seward calls (*Lett.* i. 97.) a *planter in the East* Indies, but, in truth, of a West Indian, who sent her over to England for her education. At the friend's house where she resided Mrs. Knowles was a frequent visiter; and by degrees she converted this inexperienced, and probably not very wise, young creature to Quakerism. Miss Seward, with more than her usual inaccuracy, has made a romantic history of this lady, and, amongst other fables, states that she sacrificed a fortune of 100,000*l.* by her conscientious conversion. Mr. Markland has been so kind as to put into my hands evidence from a highly respectable member of the father's family, which proves that Jane Harry's fortune was but 1000*l.*; and so little was her father displeased at her conversion, that he rather approved of it, and gave her 1000*l.* more. So vanishes another of Miss Seward's romances. — C.

She knew no more of the church which she left, and that which she embraced, than she did of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems." MRS. KNOWLES. "She had the New Testament before her." JOHNSON. "Madam, she could not understand the New Testament, the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required." MRS. KNOWLES. "It is clear as to essentials." JOHNSON. "But not as to controversial points. The heathens were easily converted, because they had nothing to give up; but we ought not, without very strong conviction indeed, to desert the religion in which we have been educated. That is the religion given you, the religion in which it may be said Providence has placed you. If you live conscientiously in that religion, you may be safe. But error is dangerous indeed, if you err when you choose a religion for yourself." MRS. KNOWLES. "Must we, then, go by implicit faith?" JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, the greatest part of our knowledge is implicit faith; and as to religion, have we heard all that a disciple of Confucius, all that a Mahometan, can say for himself?" He then rose again into passion, and attacked the young proselyte in the severest terms of reproach, so that both the ladies seemed to be much shocked.

We remained together till it was pretty late. Notwithstanding occasional explosions of violence, we were all delighted upon the whole with Johnson. I compared him at this time to a warm West Indian climate, where you have a bright sun, quick vege-

tation, luxuriant foliage, luscious fruits; but where the same heat sometimes produces thunder, lightning, and earthquakes in a terrible degree. (1)

(1) Mrs. Knowles, not satisfied with the fame of her needle-work, the "*sutile pictures*" mentioned by Johnson, in which she has indeed displayed much dexterity, nay, with the fame of reasoning better than women generally do, as I have fairly shown her to have done, communicated to me a dialogue of considerable length, which, after many years had elapsed, she wrote down as having passed between Dr. Johnson and her at this interview. As I had not the least recollection of it, and did not find the smallest trace of it in my "record" taken at the time, I could not, in consistency with my firm regard to authenticity, insert it in my work. It has, however, been published in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for June, 1791 [v. lxi. p. 500.]. It chiefly relates to the principles of the sect called Quakers; and no doubt the lady appears to have greatly the advantage of Dr. Johnson in argument, as well as expression. From what I have now stated, and from the internal evidence of the paper itself, any one who may have the curiosity to peruse it will judge whether it was wrong in me to reject it, however willing to gratify Mrs. Knowles. — B.

Mrs. Knowles, to her own account of this conversation was desirous of adding Miss Seward's testimony; and Miss Seward, who had by this time become exceedingly hostile to Johnson's memory, and was a great admirer of Mrs. Knowles, was not unwilling to gratify her. She accordingly communicated, to Mrs. Knowles her notes of the conversation (*Lett.* v. i. 97), which, it may be fairly presumed, were not too partial to Johnson. But they, nevertheless, did not satisfy the fair disputant, who, as Miss Seward complains (*Lett.* ii. 179.), was "curiously dissatisfied with them, because they did not contain all that had passed, and as *exhibiting her in a poor eclipsed light*;" and it is amusing to observe, that — except on the words "*odious wench*" at the outset, in which all three accounts agree, and the words "*I never desire to meet fools anywhere,*" with which the ladies agree that the conversation ended — there is little accordance between them. Had they been content to say that the violence of Johnson was a disagreeable contrast to the quiet reasoning of the fair Quaker, they would probably have said no more than the truth; but when they affect to give the precise dialogue in the *very words* of the speakers, and yet do not agree in almost any one expression or sentiment, — when neither preserve a word of what Mr. Boswell reports, — and when both (but particularly Mrs. Knowles) attribute to Johnson the poorest and feeblest

trash, — we may be forgiven for rejecting both as fabulous, and the rather because Mr. Boswell's note was written on the *instant* ("his custom always of the afternoon"); while those of the ladies seem to have been made up *many years* after the event. It may, however, be suspected that Boswell was himself a little ashamed of Johnson's violence, for he evidently slurs over the latter part of the conversation. But in the Doctor's behalf it should be recollected, that he had taken a great and affectionate interest in this young creature, who had, as he feared, not only endangered her spiritual welfare, but offended her friends, and forfeited her fortune; and that he was forced into the discussion by the very person by whose unauthorised and underhand interference so much mischief (as he considered it) had been done. — Long as this note is, it must be added, that it appears in another part of Miss Seward's correspondence (vol. ii. p. 383.), that when a young Quaker lady married a member of the church of England, Mrs. Knowles did not hesitate to designate *her as an* APOSTATE, although she had not quitted her sect, but only married one who did not belong to it. — C.

CHAPTER V.

1778.

Good Friday.— Bad Housewifery.— Books of Travels. — Fleet Street. — Meeting with Mr. Oliver Edwards. — Lawyers. — Tom Tyers. — Choice of a Profession.— Dignity of Literature.— Lord Camden. — George Psalmanazar. — Daines Barrington. — Punishment of the Pillory. — Insolence of Wealth.— Extravagance. — " Demosthenes Taylor." — Pamphlets. — Goldsmith's Comedies. — " The Beggar's Opera." — Johnson's " Historia Studiorum." — Gentleman's Magazine.— Avarice.— Bon Mots. — Burke's Classical Pun.— Egotism.

April 17., being Good-Friday, I waited on Johnson, as usual. I observed at breakfast, that although it was a part of his abstemious discipline, on this most solemn fast, to take no milk in his tea, yet when Mrs. Desmoulins inadvertently poured it in, he did not reject it. I talked of the strange indecision of mind, and imbecility in the common occurrences of life, which we may observe in some people. Johnson. " Why, Sir, I am in the habit of getting others to do things for me." Boswell. " What, Sir! have you that weakness?" Johnson. " Yes, Sir. But I always think afterwards I should have done better for myself."

I told him that at a gentleman's house where there was thought to be such extravagance or bad

management that he was living much beyond his income, his lady had objected to the cutting of a pickled mango, and that I had taken an opportunity to ask the price of it, and found it was only two shillings; so here was a very poor saving. JOHNSON. "Sir, that is the blundering economy of a narrow understanding. It is stopping one hole in a sieve."

I expressed some inclination to publish an account of my travels upon the continent of Europe, for which I had a variety of materials collected. JOHNSON. "I do not say, Sir, you may not publish your travels; but I give you my opinion, that you would lessen yourself by it. What can you tell of countries so well known as those upon the continent of Europe, which you have visited?" BOSWELL. "But I can give an entertaining narrative, with many incidents, anecdotes, *jeux d'esprit*, and remarks, so as to make very pleasant reading." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, most modern travellers in Europe who have published their travels have been laughed at: I would not have you added to the number. (1) The world is now not contented to be merely entertained by a traveller's narrative; they want to learn something. Now some of my friends asked me, why I did not give some account of my travels in France. The reason is plain; intelligent readers had seen more of France than I had. *You* might

(1) I believe, however, I shall follow my own opinion; for the world has shown a very flattering partiality to my writings, on many occasions. — B. — [Mr. Boswell mentions several intended publications in this manner, none of which he lived to execute. — CHALMERS.]

have liked my travels in France, and THE CLUB might have liked them; but, upon the whole, there would have been more ridicule than good produced by them." BOSWELL. "I cannot agree with you, Sir. People would like to read what you say of any thing. Suppose a face has been painted by fifty painters before; still we love to see it done by Sir Joshua." JOHNSON. "True, Sir; but Sir Joshua cannot paint a face when he has not time to look on it." BOSWELL. "Sir, a sketch of any sort by him is valuable. And, Sir, to talk to you in your own style (raising my voice and shaking my head), you *should* have given us your travels in France. I am *sure* I am right, and *there's an end on't.*"

I said to him that it was certainly true, as my friend Dempster had observed in his letter to me upon the subject, that a great part of what was in his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland" had been in his mind before he left London. JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, the topics were; and books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind; his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another. As the Spanish proverb says, 'He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.' So it is in travelling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge." BOSWELL. "The proverb, I suppose, Sir, means, he must carry a large stock with him to trade with." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir."

It was a delightful day: as we walked to St. Clement's church, I again remarked that Fleet-street was the most cheerful scene in the world. "Fleet-street," said I, "is in my mind more delightful than Tempé." JOHNSON. "Ay, Sir, but let it be compared with Mull!"

There was a very numerous congregation to-day at St. Clement's church, which Dr. Johnson said he observed with pleasure.

And now I am to give a pretty full account of one of the most curious incidents in Johnson's life, of which he himself has made the following minute on this day:

"In my return from church, I was accosted by Edwards(1), an old fellow-collegian, who had not seen me since 1729.(2) He knew me, and asked if I remembered one Edwards; I did not at first recollect the name, but gradually, as we walked along, recovered it, and told him a conversation that had passed at an ale-house between us. My purpose is to continue our acquaintance." (Pr. and Med. p. 164.)

It was in Butcher-row that this meeting happened. Mr. Edwards, who was a decent-looking, elderly man, in gray clothes, and a wig of many curls, accosted Johnson with familiar confidence, knowing

(1) Oliver Edwards entered at Pembroke College only in June, 1729, so that he and Johnson could not have been long acquainted. — HALL.

(2) This deliberate assertion of Johnson, that he had not seen Edwards since 1729, is a confirmation of the opinion derived by Dr. Hall from the dates in the college books, that Johnson did not return to Pembroke College after Christmas, 1729 — an important fact in his early history. See antè, Vol. I. p. 79. n. — C.

who he was, while Johnson returned his salutation with a courteous formality, as to a stranger. But as soon as Edwards had brought to his recollection their having been at Pembroke College together nine-and-forty years ago, he seemed much pleased, asked where he lived, and said he should be glad to see him in Bolt-court. EDWARDS. "Ah, Sir! we are old men now." JOHNSON (who never liked to think of being old). "Don't let us discourage one another." EDWARDS. "Why, doctor, you look stout and hearty. I am happy to see you so; for the newspapers told us you were very ill." JOHNSON. "Ay, Sir, they are always telling lies of *us old fellows*."

Wishing to be present at more of so singular a conversation as that between two fellow-collegians, who had lived forty years in London without ever having chanced to meet, I whispered to Mr. Edwards that Dr. Johnson was going home, and that he had better accompany him now. So Edwards walked along with us, I eagerly assisting to keep up the conversation. Mr. Edwards informed Dr. Johnson that he had practised long as a solicitor in Chancery, but that he now lived in the country upon a little farm, about sixty acres, just by Stevenage, in Hertfordshire, and that he came to London (to Barnard's Inn, No. 6.) generally twice a week. Johnson appearing to be in a reverie, Mr. Edwards addressed himself to me, and expatiated on the pleasure of living in the country. BOSWELL. "I have no notion of this, Sir. What you have to entertain you is, I think, exhausted in half an hour." ED-

WARDS. "What! don't you love to have hope realised? I see my grass, and my corn, and my trees growing. Now, for instance, I am curious to see if this frost has not nipped my fruit trees." JOHNSON (who we did not imagine was attending). "You find, Sir, you have fears as well as hopes." So well did he see the whole, when another saw but the half of a subject. (1)

When we got to Dr. Johnson's house, and were seated in his library, the dialogue went on admirably. EDWARDS. "Sir, I remember you would not let us say *prodigious* at college. For even then, Sir, (turning to me), he was delicate in language, and we all feared him."(2) JOHNSON (to Edwards). "From your having practised the law long, Sir, I presume you must be rich." EDWARDS. "No, Sir; I got a good deal of money; but I had a number of poor relations to whom I gave a great part of it." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have been rich in the most valuable sense of the word." EDWARDS. But I shall not die rich." JOHNSON. "Nay, sure, Sir, it is better to *live* rich, than to *die* rich." EDWARDS. "I wish I had continued at college." JOHNSON. "Why do you wish that, Sir?" EDWARDS. "Because I think I should have had a much easier life than mine has been. I should have

(1) Nay, not so. The question raised was the want of *interest* in a country life; and the *fear* was, therefore, as good as the *hope*. — C.

(2) Johnson said to me afterwards, "Sir, they respected me for my literature; and yet it was not great but by comparison. Sir, it is amazing how little literature there is in the world."

myself from eating one thing rather than another, nor from one kind of weather rather than another. There are people, I believe, who feel a difference; but I am not one of them. And as to regular meals, I have fasted from the Sunday's dinner to the Tuesday's dinner without any inconvenience. I believe it is best to eat just as one is hungry: but a man who is in business, or a man who has a family, must have stated meals. I am a straggler. I may leave this town and go to Grand Cairo, without being missed here, or observed there." EDWARDS. "Don't you eat supper, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." EDWARDS. "For my part, now, I consider supper as a turnpike through which one must pass in order to get to bed."(1)

JOHNSON. "You are a lawyer, Mr. Edwards. Lawyers know life practically. A bookish man should always have them to converse with. They have what he wants." EDWARDS. "I am grown old: I am sixty-five." JOHNSON. "I shall be sixty-eight next birth-day. Come, Sir, drink water, and put in for a hundred."

Mr. Edwards mentioned a gentleman(2) who had left his whole fortune to Pembroke College. JOHNSON. "Whether to leave one's whole fortune to a college be right, must depend upon circumstances. I would leave the interest of the fortune I be-

(1) I am not absolutely sure but this was my *own* suggestion, though it is truly in the character of Edwards.

(2) This must have been the Rev. James Phipps, who had been a scholar of Pembroke, and who, in 1778, left his estates to the college to purchase livings for a particular foundation, and for other purposes. — HALL.

queathed to a college to my relations or my friends, for their lives. It is the same thing to a college, which is a permanent society, whether it gets the money now or twenty years hence; and I would wish to make my relations or friends feel the benefit of it."

This interview confirmed my opinion of Johnson's most humane and benevolent heart. His cordial and placid behaviour to an old fellow collegian, a man so different from himself; and his telling him that he would go down to his farm and visit him, showed a kindness of disposition very rare at an advanced age. He observed, "how wonderful it was that they had both been in London forty years, without having ever once met, and both walkers in the street too!" Mr. Edwards, when going away, again recurred to his consciousness of senility, and, looking full in Johnson's face, said to him, "You'll find in Dr. Young,

'O my coevals; remnants of yourselves.'"

Johnson did not relish this at all; but shook his head with impatience. Edwards walked off seemingly highly pleased with the honour of having been thus noticed by Dr. Johnson. When he was gone, I said to Johnson, I thought him but a weak man. JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir. Here is a man who has passed through life without experience: yet I would rather have him with me than a more sensible man who will not talk readily. This man is always willing to say what he has to say." Yet Dr. Johnson had himself by no means that willingness which

he praised so much, and I think so justly: for who has not felt the painful effect of the dreary void, when there is a total silence in a company, for any length of time; or, which is as bad, or perhaps worse, when the conversation is with difficulty kept up by a perpetual effort?

Johnson once observed to me, "Tom Tyers described me the best: 'Sir,' said he, 'you are like a ghost: you never speak till you are spoken to.'"

The gentleman whom he thus familiarly mentioned, was Mr. Thomas Tyers, son of Mr. Jonathan Tyers, the founder of that excellent place of public amusement, Vauxhall Gardens, which must ever be an estate to its proprietor, as it is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of curious show,—gay exhibition,—music, vocal and instrumental, not too refined for the general ear; for all which only a shilling is paid (1); and, though last, not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale. Mr. Thomas Tyers was bred to the law; but having a handsome fortune, vivacity of temper, and eccentricity of mind, he could not confine himself to the regularity of practice. He therefore ran about the world with a pleasant carelessness, amusing

(1) In summer, 1792, additional and more expensive decorations having been introduced, the price of admission was raised to two shillings. I cannot approve of this. The company may be more select, but a number of the honest commonalty are, I fear, excluded from sharing in elegant and innocent entertainments. An attempt to abolish the one-shilling gallery at the playhouse has been very properly counteracted. — B.—The admission has been since raised to four shillings, without improving, it is said, either the class of company, or the profits, of the proprietors. — C.

every body by his, desultory conversation. He abounded in anecdote, but was not sufficiently attentive to accuracy. I therefore cannot venture to avail myself much of a biographical sketch of Johnson which he published, being one among the various persons ambitious of appending their names to that of my illustrious friend. That sketch is, however, an entertaining little collection of fragments. Those which he published of Pope and Addison are of higher merit; but his fame must rest chiefly upon his "Political Conferences," in which he introduces several eminent persons delivering their sentiments in the way of dialogue, and discovers a considerable share of learning, various knowledge, and discernment of character. This much may I be allowed to say of a man who was exceedingly obliging to me, and who lived with Dr Johnson in as easy a manner as almost any of his very numerous acquaintance.

Mr. Edwards had said to me aside, that Dr. Johnson should have been of a profession. I repeated the remark to Johnson, that I might have his own thoughts on the subject. JOHNSON. "Sir, it *would* have been better that I had been of a profession. (1) I ought to have been a lawyer." BOSWELL. "I do not think, Sir, it would have been better, for we should not have had the English Dictionary."

(1) ["That accurate judge of human life, Dr. Johnson, has often been heard by me to observe, that it was the greatest misfortune which could befal a man to have been bred to no profession, and pathetically to regret that this misfortune was his own." *More's Practical Piety*, p. 213. — MARKLAND.]

JOHNSON. "But you would have had Reports." BOSWELL. "Ay; but there would not have been another who could have written the Dictionary. There have been many very good judges. Suppose you had been lord chancellor; you would have delivered opinions with more extent of mind, and in a more ornamented manner, than perhaps any chancellor ever did, or ever will do. But, I believe, causes have been as judiciously decided as you could have done." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. Property has been as well settled."

Johnson, however, had a noble ambition floating in his mind, and had, undoubtedly, often speculated on the possibility of his supereminent powers being rewarded in this great and liberal country by the highest honours of the state. Sir William Scott informs me, that upon the death of the late Lord Lichfield, who was chancellor of the University of Oxford, he said to Johnson, "What a pity it is Sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law! You might have been lord chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Lichfield, your native city, is extinct, you might have had it." Johnson, upon this, seemed much agitated; and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"

But he did not repine at the prosperity of others. The late Dr. Thomas Leland told Mr. Courtenay, that when Mr. Edmund Burke showed Johnson his fine house and lands near Beaconsfield, John-

son coolly said, "*Non equidem invideo; miror magis.*"(1)

Yet no man had a higher notion of the dignity of literature than Johnson, or was more determined in maintaining the respect which he justly considered as due to it. Of this, besides the general tenor of his conduct in society, some characteristical instances may be mentioned.

He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him.

Goldsmith, in his diverting simplicity, complained

(1) I am not entirely without suspicion that Johnson may have felt a little momentary envy; for no man loved the good things of this life better than he did, and he could not but be conscious that he deserved a much larger share of them than he ever had. I attempted in a newspaper to comment on the above passage in the manner of Warburton, who must be allowed to have shown uncommon ingenuity, in giving to any author's text whatever meaning he chose it should carry. As this imitation may amuse my readers, I shall here introduce it:

"No saying of Dr. Johnson's has been more misunderstood than his applying to Mr. Burke, when he first saw him at his fine place at Beaconsfield, *Non equidem invideo, miror magis.* These two celebrated men had been friends for many years before Mr. Burke entered on his parliamentary career. They were both writers, both members of The Literary Club; when, therefore, Dr. Johnson saw Mr. Burke in a situation so much more splendid than that to which he himself had attained, he did not mean to express that he thought it a disproportionate prosperity; but while he, as a philosopher, asserted an exemption from envy, *non equidem invideo*, he went on in the words of the poet, *miror magis*; thereby signifying, either that he was occupied in admiring what he was glad to see, or, perhaps, that, considering the general lot of men of superior abilities, he wondered that Fortune, who is represented as blind, should, in this instance, have been so just."

one day, in a mixed company, of Lord Camden. "I met him," said he, "at Lord Clare's house(1) in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man." The company having laughed heartily, Johnson stood forth in defence of his friend. "Nay, gentlemen," said he, "Dr. Goldsmith is in the right. A nobleman ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith; and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him."

Nor could he patiently endure to hear, that such respect as he thought due only to higher intellectual qualities should be bestowed on men of slighter, though perhaps more amusing, talents. I told him, that one morning, when I went to breakfast with Garrick, who was very vain of his intimacy with Lord Camden, he accosted me thus: "Pray now, did you—did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?" "No, Sir," said I; "pray what do you mean by the question?" "Why," replied Garrick, with an affected indifference, yet as if standing on tip-toe, "Lord Camden has this moment left me. We have had a long walk together." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, Garrick talked very properly. Lord Camden *was* a *little lawyer* to be associating so familiarly with a player."

Sir Joshua Reynolds observed, with great truth, that Johnson considered Garrick to be as it were, his *property*. He would allow no man either to

(1) [See antè, Vol. III. p. 153, n.—C.]

blame or to praise Garrick in his presence, without contradicting him. (1)

Having fallen into a very serious frame of mind, in which mutual expressions of kindness passed between us, such as would be thought too vain in me to repeat, I talked with regret of the sad inevitable certainty that one of us must survive the other. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, that is an affecting consideration. I remember Swift, in one of his letters to Pope, says, 'I intend to come over, that we may meet once more; and when we must part, it is what happens to all human beings.'" BOSWELL. "The hope that we shall see our departed friends again must support the mind." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir." (2) BOSWELL. "There is a strange unwillingness to part with life, independent of serious fears as to futurity. A reverend friend of ours (3) (naming him) tells me, that he feels an uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving his house, his study, his books." JOHNSON. "This is foolish in *****. A man need not be uneasy on these grounds: for, as he will retain his consciousness, he may say with the philosopher, *Omnia mea mecum porto.*" Bos-

(1) Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote two Dialogues, in illustration of this position, in the first of which Johnson *attacks* Garrick in opposition to Sir Joshua, and in the other *defends* him against Gibbon. Lord Farnborough has obligingly communicated to me the evidence of the late Sir George Beaumont (who had received copies of them from Sir Joshua himself), both of their authenticity and of their correct imitation of Johnson's style of conversation, and I have therefore given them a place in the Appendix.—C. [See *post*, JOHNSONIANA.]

(2) See on the same subject, Vol. III. p. 192. — M.

(3) Dr. Percy. — C.

WELL. "True, Sir: we may carry our books in our heads; but still there is something painful in the thought of leaving for ever what has given us pleasure. I remember, many years ago, when my imagination was warm, and I happened to be in a melancholy mood, it distressed me to think of going into a state of being in which Shakspeare's poetry did not exist. A lady, whom I then much admired, a very amiable woman, humoured my fancy, and relieved me by saying, 'The first thing you will meet with in the other world will be an elegant copy of Shakspeare's works presented to you.'" Dr. Johnson smiled [1] benignantly at this, and did not appear to disapprove of the notion.

We went to St. Clement's church again in the afternoon, and then returned and drank tea and coffee in Mrs. Williams's room; Mrs. Desmoulins doing the honours of the tea-table. I observed that he would not even look at a proof-sheet of his "Life of Waller" on Good-Friday.

Mr. Allen, the printer, brought a book on agriculture, which was printed, and was soon to be published. [2] It was a very strange performance, the author having mixed in it his own thoughts upon various topics, along with his remarks on ploughing, sowing, and other farming operations. He seemed to be an absurd profane fellow, and had introduced in his books many sneers at religion, with

(1) Dr. Johnson might well smile at such a *distress* of mind, and at the argument by which it was *relieved*. — C.

(2) This was Marshall's "Minutes of Agriculture." The author lived to publish many more important and less offensive works on this subject. — CHALMERS.

equal ignorance and conceit. Dr. Johnson permitted me to read some passages aloud. One was that he resolved to work on Sunday, and did work, but he owned he felt *some* weak compunction; and he had this very curious reflection: "I was born in the wilds of Christianity, and the briars and thorns still hang about me." Dr. Johnson could not help laughing at this ridiculous image, yet was very angry at the fellow's impiety. "However," said he, "the reviewers will make him hang himself." He however observed, "that formerly there might have been a dispensation obtained for working on Sunday in the time of harvest." (1) Indeed, in ritual observances, were all the ministers of religion what they should be, and what many of them are, such a power might be wisely and safely lodged with the church.

On Saturday, 18th April, I drank tea with him. He praised the late Mr. Duncombe (2), of Canterbury, as a pleasing man. "He used to come to me; I did not seek much after *him*. Indeed, I never sought much after any body." BOSWELL. "Lord Orrery, I suppose." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; I never went to him but when he sent for me." BOSWELL. "Richardson?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir: but I sought after George Psalmanazar the most.

(1) [In the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth for the observance of Sunday, there was one exception — viz. for labour in time of harvest, after divine service: but which was not provided for in the act 29 Car. 2. c. 7. — MARKLAND.]

(2) William Duncombe, Esq. He married the sister of John Hughes, the poet; was the author of two tragedies, and other ingenious productions; and died 26th Feb. 1769, aged 79. — M.

I used to go and sit with him at an alehouse in the city." (1)

I am happy to mention another instance which I discovered of his *seeking after* a man of merit. Soon after the Honourable Daines Barrington had published his excellent "Observations on the Statutes (2)," Johnson waited on that worthy and learned gentleman; and, having told him his name, courteously said, "I have read your book, Sir, with great pleasure, and wish to be better known to you." Thus began an acquaintance, which was continued with mutual regard as long as Johnson lived.

Talking of a recent seditious delinquent (3), he said, "They should set him in the pillory, that he may be punished in a way that would disgrace him."

(1) This extraordinary person lived and died at a house in Old Street, where Dr. Johnson was witness to his talents and virtues, and to his final preference of the church of England, after having studied, disgraced, and adorned so many modes of worship. The name he went by was not supposed by his friend to be that of his family, but all inquiries were vain: his reasons for concealing his original were penitentiary; he deserved no other name than that of the impostor, he said. His pious and patient endurance of a tedious illness, ending in an exemplary death (1763), confirmed the strong impression his merit had made upon the mind of Dr. Johnson. — PIOZZI. — [The *Memoir of Psalmanazar*, written by himself, and published in 1754, though now a neglected piece of biography, will well repay the reader, as it affords much curious information. — MARKLAND.]

(2) Quarto, 1766. The worthy author died March 13. 1800, aged about 74. — M.

(3) Mr. Horne Tooke, who had been in the preceding July convicted of a seditious libel. The sentence — pronounced in November, 1777 — was a year's imprisonment, and 200*l.* fine: but it seems strange that Johnson should, in April, 1778, have spoken *conjecturally* and *prospectively* of a sentence passed six months before. Perhaps this may be accounted for by Horne Tooke's having obtained a writ of error, and so suspended the execution of the sentence. See *post*, p. 206. — C.

I observed, that the pillory does not always disgrace. And I mentioned an instance of a gentleman [1], who I thought was not dishonoured by it. JOHNSON. "Ay, but he was, Sir. He could not mouth and strut as he used to do, after having been there. People are not willing to ask a man to their tables, who has stood in the pillory."

The gentleman who had dined with us at Dr. Percy's [2] came in. Johnson attacked the Americans with intemperate vehemence of abuse. I said something in their favour; and added, that I was always sorry, when he talked on that subject. This, it seems, exasperated him; though he said nothing at the time. The cloud was charged with sulphureous vapour, which was afterwards to burst in thunder. We talked of a gentleman [Mr. Langton], who was running out his fortune in London; and I said, "We must get him out of it. All his friends must quarrel with him, and that will soon drive him away." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, we'll send *you* to him. If your company does not drive a man out of his house, nothing will." This was a horrible shock, for which there was no visible cause. I afterwards asked him, why he had said so harsh a thing. JOHN-

(1) Probably Dr. Shebbeare. It was Shebbeare's exposure which suggested the witty allusion of the *Heroic Epistle*,

> "Does envy doubt? Witness, ye chosen train,
> Who breathe the sweets of his Saturnian reign;
> Witness, ye Hills, ye Johnsons, Scots, Shebbeares,
> Hark to my call, *for some of you have ears!*"

But his ears were not endangered; indeed he was so favourably treated, being allowed to stand *on*, and not *in*, the pillory, and to have certain other indulgences, that the sheriff was afterwards prosecuted for partiality towards him. — C.

(2) See *antè*, p. 114. — C.

SON. "Because, Sir, you made me angry about the Americans." BOSWELL. "But why did you not take your revenge directly?" JOHNSON (smiling). "Because, Sir, I had nothing ready. A man cannot strike till he has his weapons." This was a candid and pleasant confession.

He showed me to-night his drawing-room, very genteelly fitted up, and said, "Mrs. Thrale sneered, when I talked of my having asked you and your lady to live at my house. I was obliged to tell her, that you would be in as respectable a situation in my house as in hers. Sir, the insolence of wealth will creep out." BOSWELL. "She has a little both of the insolence of wealth and the conceit of parts." JOHNSON. "The insolence of wealth is a wretched thing; but the conceit of parts has some foundation. To be sure, it should not be. But who is without it?" BOSWELL. "Yourself, Sir." JOHNSON. "Why, I play no tricks: I lay no traps." BOSWELL. "No, Sir. You are six feet high, and you only do not stoop."

We talked of the numbers of people that sometimes have composed the household of great families. I mentioned that there were a hundred in the family of the present Earl of Eglingtoune's* father. Dr. Johnson seeming to doubt it, I began to enumerate; "Let us see, my lord and my lady, two." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if you are to count by twos, you may be long enough." BOSWELL. "Well, but now I add two sons and seven daughters, and a servant for each; that will make twenty; so we have the fifth part already." JOHNSON. "Very true. You

get at twenty pretty readily; but you will not so easily get further on. 'We grow to five feet pretty readily; but it is not so easy to grow to seven.'" (1)

On Sunday, 19th April, being Easter-day, after the solemnities of the festival in St. Paul's church, I visited him, but could not stay to dinner. I expressed a wish to have the arguments for Christianity always in readiness, that my religious faith might be as firm and clear as any proposition whatever; so that I need not be under the least uneasiness when it should be attacked. JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot answer all objections. You have demonstration for a first cause: you see he must be good as well as powerful, because there is nothing to make him otherwise, and goodness of itself is preferable. Yet you have against this, what is very certain, the unhappiness of human life. This, however, gives us reason to hope for a future state of compensation, that there may be a perfect system. But of that we were not sure, till we had a positive revelation." I told him, that his "Rasselas" had often made me unhappy; for it represented the misery of human life so well, and so convincingly to a thinking mind, that if at any time the impression wore off, and I felt myself easy, I began to suspect some delusion.

(1) "Yesterday (18th) I rose late, having not slept ill. Having promised a dedication, I thought it necessary to write; but for some time neither wrote nor read. Langton came in and talked. After dinner I wrote. At tea Boswell came in. He stayed till near twelve." — *Pr. and Med.* p. 163. — He means, that if it had not been in performance of a *promise*, he would not have done any worldly business on Easter eve. What the dedication was does not appear. — C.

"In reviewing my time from Easter, 1777, I found very melancholy and shameful blank. So little has been done, that days and months are without any trace. My health has, indeed, been very much interrupted. My nights have been commonly, not only restless, but painful and fatiguing. My respiration was once so difficult, that an asthma was suspected. I could not walk, but with great difficulty, from Stowhill to Greenhill. Some relaxation of my breast has been procured, I think, by opium, which, though it never gives me sleep, frees my breast from spasms. I have written a little of the Lives of the Poets. I think with all my usual vigour. I have made sermons, perhaps as readily as formerly. (1) My memory is less faithful in retaining names, and, I am afraid, in retaining occurrences. Of this vacillation and vagrancy of mind, I impute a great part to a fortuitous and unsettled life, and therefore purpose to spend my time with more method."—(Pr. and Med., p. 167.)

On Monday, 20th April, I found him at home in the morning. We talked of a gentleman [Mr. Langton] who we apprehended was gradually involving his circumstances by bad management. JOHNSON. "Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, they'd stop it. You must speak to him. It is really miserable. Were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich; but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it.

(1) Probably, those which were *left for publication* by Dr. Taylor, and written, perhaps (or some of them), at Ashbourne in the preceding summer. See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 226. — C.

He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die; to bleed to death, because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to stitch it up." I cannot but pause a moment to admire the fecundity of fancy, and choice of language, which in this instance, and, indeed, on almost all occasions, he displayed. It was well observed by Dr. Percy (afterwards Bishop of Dromore), "The conversation of Johnson is strong and clear, and may be compared to an antique statue, where every vein and muscle is distinct and bold. Ordinary conversation resembles an inferior cast."

On Saturday, 25th April, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the learned Dr. Musgrave (1); Counsellor Leland of Ireland, son to the historian; Mrs. Cholmondeley (2), and some more ladies. "The Project (3)," a new poem, was read to the company by Dr. Musgrave. JOHNSON. "Sir, it has no power. Were it not for the well-known names with which it is filled, it would be nothing: the names carry the poet, not the poet the names." MUSGRAVE. "A temporary poem always entertains

(1) Samuel Musgrave, M. D., editor of the Euripides, and author of "Dissertations on the Grecian Mythology," &c. published in 1782, after his death, by the learned Mr. Tyrwhitt. — M.

(2) See antè, Vol. IV. p. 272. — C.

(3) "The Project," a poem (published anonymously in 1778), by Richard Tickell, author of "Anticipation." — C.

us. JOHNSON. "So does an account of the criminals hanged yesterday entertain us."

He proceeded;—"Demosthenes Taylor, as he was called (that is, the editor of Demosthenes), was the most silent man, the merest statue of a man, that I have ever seen. I once dined in company with him, and all he said during the whole time was no more than *Richard*. How a man should say only *Richard*, it is not easy to imagine. But it was thus: Dr. Douglas was talking of Dr. Zachary Grey, and ascribing to him something that was written by Dr. Richard Grey. So, to correct him, Taylor said, '*Richard*.'"

Mrs. Cholmondeley, in a high flow of spirits, exhibited some lively sallies of hyperbolical compliment to Johnson, with whom she had been long acquainted, and was very easy. He was quick in catching the *manner* of the moment, and answered her somewhat in the style of the hero of a romance, "Madam, you crown me with unfading laurels."

I happened, I know not how, to say that a pamphlet meant a prose piece. JOHNSON. "No, Sir A few sheets of poetry unbound are a pamphlet (1), as much as a few sheets of prose." (2) MUSGRAVE. "A pamphlet may be understood to mean a poetical

(1) Dr. Johnson is here perfectly correct, and is supported by the usage of preceding writers. So in *Musarum Deliciæ*, a collection of poems, 8vo, 1656 (the writer is speaking of Suckling' play entitled Aglaura, printed in folio):

> "This great voluminous *pamphlet* may be said,
> To be like one, that hath more hair than head"—M.

(2) [It seems odd that Johnson did not refer to the derivation of pamphlet, "*par un filet*," though it is given in his dictionary —FONNEREAU.]

piece in Westminster-hall, that is, in formal language; but in common language it is understood to mean prose." JOHNSON. (And here was one of the many instances of his knowing clearly and telling exactly how a thing is), "A pamphlet is understood in common language to mean prose, only from this, that there is so much more prose written than poetry; as when we say a *book*, prose is understood for the same reason, though a book may as well be in poetry as in prose. We understand what is most general, and we name what is less frequent."

We talked of a lady's verses on Ireland. MISS REYNOLDS. "Have you seen them, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Madam; I have seen a translation from Horace, by one of her daughters. She showed it me." MISS REYNOLDS. "And how was it, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, very well, for a young miss's verses; that is to say, compared with excellence, nothing; but very well, for the person who wrote them. I am vexed at being shown verses in that manner." MISS REYNOLDS. "But if they should be good, why not give them hearty praise?" JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, because I have not then got the better of my bad humour from having been shown them. You must consider, Madam, beforehand, they may be bad as well as good. Nobody has a right to put another under such a difficulty, that he must either hurt the person by telling the truth, or hurt himself by telling what is not true." BOSWELL. "A man often shows his writings to people of eminence, to obtain from them, either from their good-nature, or from their not being able to tell the truth

firmly, a commendation, of which he may afterwards avail himself." JOHNSON. "Very true, Sir. Therefore, the man who is asked by an author, what he thinks of his work, is put to *the torture*, and is not obliged to speak the truth; so that what he says is not considered as his opinion; yet he has said it and cannot retract it; and this author, when mankind are hunting him with a canister at his tail, can say, 'I would not have published, had not Johnson, or Reynolds, or Musgrave, or some other good judge, commended the work.' Yet I consider it as a very difficult question in conscience, whether one should advise a man not to publish a work, if profit be his object; for a man may say, 'Had it not been for you, I should have had the money.' Now you cannot be sure; for you have only your own opinion, and the public may think very differently." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "You must upon such an occasion have two judgments; one as to the real value of the work, the other as to what may please the general taste at the time." JOHNSON. "But you can be *sure* of neither; and therefore I should scruple much to give a suppressive vote. Both Goldsmith's comedies were once refused; his first by Garrick, his second by Colman, who was prevailed on at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force, to bring it on. His 'Vicar of Wakefield' I myself did not think would have had much success. It was written and sold to a bookseller before his 'Traveller,' but published after; so little expectation had the bookseller from it. Had it been sold after 'The Traveller,' he might have had twice as much money for

it, though sixty guineas was no mean price. The bookseller had the advantage of Goldsmith's reputation from 'The Traveller' in the sale, though Goldsmith had it not in selling the copy." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "The Beggar's Opera affords a proof how strangely people will differ in opinion about a literary performance. Burke thinks it has no merit." JOHNSON. "It was refused by one of the houses; but I should have thought it would succeed, not from any great excellence in the writing, but from the novelty, and the general spirit and gaiety of the piece, which keeps the audience always attentive, and dismisses them in good humour."

We went to the drawing-room, where was a considerable increase of company. Several of us got round Dr. Johnson, and complained that he would not give us an exact catalogue of his works, that there might be a complete edition. He smiled, and evaded our entreaties. That he intended to do it, I have no doubt, because I have heard him say so; and I have in my possession an imperfect list, fairly written out, which he entitles *Historia Studiorum*. I once got from one of his friends a list, which there was pretty good reason to suppose was accurate; for it was written down in his presence by this friend, who enumerated each article aloud, and had some of them mentioned to him by Mr. Levett, in concert with whom it was made out; and Johnson, who heard all this, did not contradict it. But when I showed a copy of this list to him, and mentioned the evidence for its exactness, he laughed, and said,

"I was willing to let them go on as they pleased, and never interfered." Upon which I read it to him, article by article, and got him positively to own or refuse; and then, having obtained certainty so far, I got some other articles confirmed by him directly, and, afterwards, from time to time, made additions under his sanction.

His friend, Edward Cave, having been mentioned, he told us, "Cave used to sell ten thousand of 'The Gentleman's Magazine;' yet such was then his minute attention and anxiety that the sale should not suffer the smallest decrease, that he would name a particular person who he heard had talked of leaving off the Magazine, and would say, 'Let us have something good next month.'"(1)

It was observed, that avarice was inherent in some dispositions. JOHNSON. "No man was born a miser, because no man was born to possession. Every man is born *cupidus* — desirous of getting; but not *avarus* — desirous of keeping." BOSWELL. I have heard old Mr. Sheridan maintain, with much ingenuity, that a complete miser is a happy man: a miser who gives himself wholly to the one passion of saving." JOHNSON. "That is flying in the face of all the world, who have called an avaricious man a *miser*, because he is miserable. No, Sir; a man who both spends and saves money is the happiest man, because he has both enjoyments."

The conversation having turned on *bon-mots*, he

(1) This seems to confirm the conjecture made *ante*, Vol. I. p. 185. that Johnson acted for a time as the editor of the Magazine. — C

quoted, from one of the *Ana*, an exquisite instance of flattery in a maid of honour in France, who being asked by the queen what o'clock it was, answered, "What your majesty pleases." (1) He admitted that Mr. Burke's classical pun (2) upon Mr. Wilkes's being carried on the shoulders of the mob,

"—————— numerisque fertur
Lege solutis,"

was admirable; and though he was strangely unwilling to allow to that extraordinary man the talent of wit (3), he also laughed with approbation at another of his playful conceits; which was, that "Horace has in one line given a description of a good desirable manor:—

'Est *modus* in rebus, sunt certi denique *fines*;

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(1) The anecdote is told in "*Menagiana*," vol. iii. p. 104., but not of a "*maid of honour*," nor as an instance of "*exquisite flattery*." "M. de Uzès était chevalier d'honneur de la reine. Cette princesse lui demanda un jour quelle heure il était; il répondit, 'Madame, l'heure qu'il plaira à votre majesté.'" Menage tells it as *a pleasantry* of M. de Uzès; but M. de la Monnoye says, that this duke was remarkable for *naïvetés* and blunders, and was a kind of *butt*, to whom the wits of the court used to attribute all manner of absurdities. — C.

(2) See *ante*, Vol. IV. p. 23. — C.

(3) See this question fully investigated in the notes upon the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 28. *et seq.* And here, as a lawyer mindful of the maxim *Suum cuique tribuito*, I cannot forbear to mention, that the additional note, beginning with "I find since the former edition," is not mine, but was obligingly furnished by Mr. Malone, who was so kind as to superintend the press while I was in Scotland, and the first part of the second edition was printing. He would not allow me to ascribe it to its proper author; but, as it is exquisitely acute and elegant, I take this opportunity, without his knowledge, to do him justice.

—at is to say, a *modus* as to the tithes and certain *fines*." (1)

He observed, "A man cannot with propriety speak of himself, except he relates simple facts; as, 'I was at Richmond:' or what depends on mensuration; as, 'I am six feet high.' He is sure he has been at Richmond; he is sure he is six feet high; but he cannot be sure he is wise, or that he has any other excellence. Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise and all the reproach of falsehood." BOSWELL. "Sometimes it may proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed. He knows that others would throw him down, and therefore he had better lie down softly of his own accord."

(1) This, as both Mr. Bindley and Dr. Kearney have observed to me, is the motto to "An Inquiry into Customary Estates and Tenants' Rights, &c.; with some Considerations for restraining excessive *Fines*," by Everard Fleetwood, Esq. 8vo. 1731. But it is, probably, a mere coincidence. Mr. Burke, perhaps, never saw that pamphlet. — M.

CHAPTER VI.

1778.

"The first Whig."—Buying Books.—Wine.—Tasso.—Homer.—Adam Smith.—Pope.—Voltaire.—Henry's History.—Modern Historians.—Greece.—Rome.—Old Age.—Dr. Robertson.—Addison.—Chinese Language.—Interest of Money.—Imagination.—Existence.—Virtue and Vice.—The Bat.—Lord Marchmont.—"Transpire."—House of Peers.—Pope's "Universal Prayer."—[illegible].—Parson Ford's Ghost.—Lord Clive.

On Tuesday, April 28., he was engaged to dine at General Paoli's, where, as I have already observed, I was still entertained in elegant hospitality, and with all the ease and comfort of a home. I called on him, and accompanied him in a hackney-coach. We stopped first at the bottom of Hedge-lane, into which he went to leave a letter, "with good news for a poor man in distress," as he told me. I did not question him particularly as to this. He himself often resembled Lady Bolingbroke's lively description of Pope: that "he was *un politique aux choux et aux raves*." He would say, "I dine to-day in Grosvenor-square;" this might be with a duke; or, perhaps, "I dine to-day at the other end of the town;" or, "A gentleman of great eminence

called on me yesterday." He loved thus to keep things floating in conjecture: *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est.* I believe I ventured to dissipate the cloud, to unveil the mystery, more freely and frequently than any of his friends. We stopped again at Wirgman's, the well-known *toy-shop* in St. James's Street, at the corner of St. James's Place, to which he had been directed, but not clearly, for he searched about some time, and could not find it at first; and said, "To direct one only to a corner shop is *toying* with one." I supposed he meant this as a play upon the word *toy*: it was the first time that I knew him stoop to such sport. After he had been some time in the shop, he sent for me to come out of the coach, and help him to choose a pair of silver buckles, as those he had were too small. Probably this alteration in dress had been suggested by Mrs. Thrale, by associating with whom, his external appearance was much improved. He got better clothes; and the dark colour, from which he never deviated, was enlivened by metal buttons. His wigs, too, were much better; and, during their travels in France, he was furnished with a Paris-made wig, of handsome construction.(1)

This choosing of silver buckles was a negotiation: "Sir," said he, "I will not have the ridiculous

(1) In general his wigs were very shabby, and their fore-parts were burned away by the near approach of the candle, which his short-sightedness rendered necessary in reading. At Streatham, Mr. Thrale's butler had always a better wig [illegible] and as Johnson [illegible] from the drawing-room, when [illegible] the servant would [illegible] the ordinary [illegible] and this ludicrous ceremony was [illegible] every day.[illegible]

large ones now in fashion; and I will give no more than a guinea for a pair." Such were the *principles* of the business; and, after some examination, he was fitted. As we drove along, I found him in a talking humour, of which I availed myself. BOSWELL. "I was this morning in Ridley's shop, Sir; and was told, that the collection called '*Johnsoniana*' (1) had sold very much." JOHNSON. "Yet the 'Journey to the Hebrides' has not had a great sale." (2) BOSWELL. "That is strange." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; for in that book I have told the world a great deal that they did not know before."

BOSWELL. "I drank chocolate, Sir, this morning with Mr. Eld; and, to my no small surprise, found him to be a *Staffordshire Whig*, a being which I did not believe had existed." JOHNSON. "Sir, there are rascals in all countries." BOSWELL. "Eld said, a *Tory* was a creature generated between a nonjuring parson and one's grandmother." JOHNSON. "And I have always said, the first *Whig* was the Devil." BOSWELL. "He certainly was, Sir. The Devil was impatient of subordination; he was the first who resisted power:—

(1) See ante, Vol. VI. p. 60. — C.

(2) Here he either was mistaken, or had a different notion of an extensive sale from what is generally entertained: for the fact is, that four thousand copies of that excellent work were sold very quickly. A new edition has been printed since his death, besides [illegible] in the collection of his works. — B. — Another edition [illegible] since Mr. Boswell wrote the above, besides [illegible] in the general collection of his works [illegible]. — M. 1804. — Hannah More says, [illegible] he had sold 4000 the first week [illegible]. This enormous sale at first, made, probably, [illegible] the subsequent sale scanty. — C. 1835.

'Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.'"

At General Paoli's were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Marchese Gherardi of Lombardy, and Mr. John Spottiswoode the younger, of Spottiswoode (1), the solicitor. At this time fears of an invasion were circulated; to obviate which Mr. Spottiswoode observed, that Mr. Fraser, the engineer, who had lately come from Dunkirk, said, that the French had the same fears of us. JOHNSON. "It is thus that mutual cowardice keeps us in peace. Were one half of mankind brave, and one half cowards, the brave would be always beating the cowards. Were all brave, they would lead a very uneasy life; all would be continually fighting: but being all cowards, we go on very well."

We talked of drinking wine. JOHNSON. "I require wine, only when I am alone. I have then often wished for it, and often taken it." SPOTTISWOODE. "What, by way of a companion, Sir?" JOHNSON. "To get rid of myself, to send myself away. Wine gives great pleasure; and every pleasure is of itself a good. It is a good, unless counterbalanced by evil. A man may have a strong reason not to drink wine; and that may be greater than the pleasure. Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more

(1) In the phraseology of Scotland, I should have said, "Mr. John Spottiswoode, the younger, *of that ilk*." Johnson knew that sense of the word very well, and has thus explained it in his "Dictionary"—*voce*, *Ilk*. "It also signifies *the same*; as, *Mackintosh of that ilk*, denotes a gentleman whose surname and the title of his estate are the same."

pleasing to others. Sometimes it does. But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others. (1) Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost. But this may be good, or it may be bad." SPOTTISWOODE. "So, Sir, wine is a key which opens a box; but this box may be either full or empty?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, conversation is the key: wine is a picklock, which forces open the box, and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives." BOSWELL. "The great difficulty of resisting wine is from benevolence. For instance, a good worthy man asks you to taste his wine, which he has had twenty years in his cellar." JOHNSON. "Sir, all this notion about benevolence arises from a man's imagining himself to be of more importance to others than he really is. They don't care a farthing whether he drinks wine or not." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "Yes, they do for the time." JOHNSON. "For the time! If they care this minute, they forget it the next. And as for the good worthy man, how do you know he is good and worthy? No good and

(1) It is observed in "Waller's Life," in the "Biographia Britannica," that he drank only water; and that while he sat in a company who were drinking wine, "he had the dexterity to accommodate his discourse to the pitch of theirs as it *sunk*." If excess in drinking be meant, the remark is acutely just. But surely a moderate use of wine gives a gaiety of spirits which water-drinkers know not.

worthy man will insist upon another man's drinking wine. As to the wine twenty years in the cellar, — of ten men, three say this, merely because they must say something; three are telling a lie, when they say they have had the wine twenty years; three would rather save the wine; one, perhaps, cares. I allow it is something to please one's company; and people are always pleased with those who partake pleasure with them. But after a man has brought himself to relinquish the great personal pleasure which arises from drinking wine (1), any other consideration is a trifle. To please others by drinking wine, is something only, if there be nothing against it. I should, however, be sorry to offend worthy men: —

> "Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
> That tends to make one worthy man my foe.'"

Boswell. "Curst be the *spring*, the *water*." Johnson. "But let us consider what a sad thing it would be, if we were obliged to drink or do any thing else that may happen to be agreeable to the company where we are." Langton. "By the same rule, you must join with a gang of cut-purses." Johnson. "Yes, Sir; but yet we must do justice to wine; we must allow it the power it possesses. To make a man pleased with himself, let me tell you, is doing a very great thing; —

> 'Si patriæ volumus, si *nobis* vivere cari.'"

I was at this time myself a water-drinker, upon

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 113., and Vol. VI. p. 162. — C.

trial, by Johnson's recommendation. JOHNSON. "Boswell is a bolder combatant than Sir Joshua: he argues for wine without the help of wine; but Sir Joshua with it." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "But to please one's company is a strong motive." JOHNSON (who, from drinking only water, supposed every body who drank wine to be elevated). "I won't argue any more with you, Sir. You are too far gone." SIR JOSHUA. "I should have thought so indeed, Sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done." JOHNSON (drawing himself in, and, I really thought, blushing). "Nay, don't be angry. I did not mean to offend you." SIR JOSHUA. "At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me; but I brought myself to drink it, that I might be like other people. The pleasure of drinking wine is so connected with pleasing your company, that altogether there is something of social goodness in it." JOHNSON. "Sir, this is only saying the same thing over again." SIR JOSHUA. "No, this is new." JOHNSON. "You put it in new words, but it is an old thought. This is one of the disadvantages of wine, it makes a man mistake words for thoughts." BOSWELL. "I think it is a new thought; at least, it is in a new *attitude*." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is only in a new coat; or an old coat with a new facing." Then laughing heartily: "It is the old dog in the new doublet. An extraordinary instance, however, may occur where a man's patron will do nothing for him, unless he will drink: *there* may be a good reason for drinking."

I mentioned a nobleman, who I believed was really uneasy, if his company would not drink hard. JOHNSON. "That is from having had people about him whom he has been accustomed to command." BOSWELL. "Supposing I should be *tête-à-tête* with him at table?" JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no more reason for your drinking with *him*, than his being sober with *you*." BOSWELL. "Why, that is true; for it would do him less hurt to be sober, than it would do me to get drunk." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and from what I have heard of him, one would not wish to sacrifice himself to such a man. If he must always have somebody to drink with him, he should buy a slave, and then he would be sure to have it. They who submit to drink as another pleases, make themselves his slaves." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, you will surely make allowance for the duty of hospitality. A gentleman who loves drinking, comes to visit me." JOHNSON. "Sir, a man knows whom he visits; he comes to the table of a sober man." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, you and I should not have been so well received in the Highlands and Hebrides, if I had not drunk with our worthy friends. Had I drunk water only as you did, they would not have been so cordial." JOHNSON. "Sir William Temple mentions, that in his travels through the Netherlands he had two or three gentlemen with him; and when a bumper was necessary, he put it on *them*. Were I to travel again through the islands, I would have Sir Joshua with me to take the bumpers." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, let me put a case. Suppose

Sir Joshua should take a jaunt into Scotland; he does me the honour to pay me a visit at my house in the country; I am overjoyed at seeing him; we are quite by ourselves: shall I unsociably and churlishly let him sit drinking by himself? No, no, my dear Sir Joshua, you shall not be treated so; I *will* take a bottle with you."

The celebrated Mrs. Rudd (1) being mentioned: JOHNSON. "Fifteen years ago, I should have gone to see her." SPOTTISWOODE. "Because she was fifteen years younger?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; but now they have a trick of putting every thing into the newspapers."

He begged of General Paoli to repeat one of the introductory stanzas of the first book of Tasso's "Jerusalem," which he did; and then Johnson found fault with the simile of sweetening the edges of a cup for a child (2), being transferred from Lucretius into an epic poem. The general said he did not imagine Homer's poetry was so ancient as is supposed, because he ascribes to a Greek colony circumstances of refinement not found in Greece itself at a later period, when Thucydides wrote. JOHNSON. "I recollect but one passage quoted by Thucydides from Homer, which is not to be found in our copies of Homer's works; I am for the antiquity of Homer, and think that a Grecian colony, by being

(1) See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 80. — C.

(2) [Così all' egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso:
Succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E dall' inganno suo vita riceve. — Canto i. s. 3.]

nearer Persia, might be more refined than the mother country."

On Wednesday, April 29., I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's (1), where were Lord Binning, Dr. Robertson, the historian, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen (2), widow of the Admiral, and mother of the present Viscount Falmouth; of whom, if it be not presumptuous in me to praise her, I would say, that her manners are the most agreeable, and her conversation the best, of any lady with whom I ever had the happiness to be acquainted. Before Johnson came, we talked a good deal of him. Ramsay said, he had always found him a very polite man, and that he treated him with great respect, which he did very sincerely. I said, I worshipped him. ROBERTSON. "But some of you spoil him: you should not worship him; you should worship no man." BOSWELL. "I cannot help worshipping him, he is so much superior to other men." ROBERTSON. "In criticism, and in wit and conversation, he is, no doubt, very excellent; but in other respects he is not above other men: he will believe any thing, and will strenuously defend the most minute circumstance connected with the church of England." BOSWELL. "Believe me, Doctor, you are much mistaken as to this; for when you talk with him calmly in private, he is very

(1) [The son of the poet. See antè, Vol. III. p. 259.]

(2) Frances, daughter of William Evelyn Glanville, Esq., married, in 1742, to Admiral Boscawen. She died in 1805. — C. — [See many interesting passages in the Memoirs of Hannah More.]

liberal in his way of thinking." ROBERTSON. "He and I have been always very gracious: the first time I met him was one evening at Strahan's, when he had just had an unlucky altercation with Adam Smith ([1]), to whom he had been so rough, that Strahan, after Smith was gone, had remonstrated with him, and told him that I was coming soon, and that he was uneasy to think that he might behave in the same manner to me. 'No, no, Sir (said Johnson), I warrant you Robertson and I shall do very well.' Accordingly he was gentle and good-humoured and courteous with me, the whole evening; and he has been so upon every occasion that we have met since. I have often said (laughing), that I have been in a great measure indebted to Smith for my good reception." BOSWELL. "His power of reasoning is very strong, and he has a peculiar art of drawing characters, which is as rare as good portrait painting." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "He is undoubtedly admirable in this; but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they really have, whether of good or bad."

No sooner did he, of whom we had been thus talking so easily, arrive, than we were all as quiet as a school upon the entrance of the head-master; and we very soon sat down to a table covered with such variety of good things, as contributed not a little to dispose him to be pleased.

(1) This, probably, was the scene, the exaggeration or misrepresentation of which may have given rise to Professor Miller's scandalous anecdote. See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 115. — C.

RAMSAY. "I am old enough (1) to have been a contemporary of Pope. His poetry was highly admired in his life-time, more a great deal than after his death." JOHNSON. "Sir, it has not been less admired since his death; no authors ever had so much fame in their own life-time as Pope and Voltaire; and Pope's poetry has been as much admired since his death as during his life: it has only not been as much talked of; but that is owing to its being now more distant, and people having other writings to talk of. Virgil is less talked of than Pope, and Homer is less talked of than Virgil; but they are not less admired. We must read what the world reads at the moment. It has been maintained that this superfetation, this teeming of the press in modern times, is prejudicial to good literature, because it obliges us to read so much of what is of inferior value, in order to be in the fashion; so that better works are neglected for want of time, because a man will have more gratification of his vanity in conversation, from having read modern books, than from having read the best works of antiquity. But it must be considered, that we have now more knowledge generally diffused: all our ladies read now, which is a great extension. Modern writers are the moons of literature; they shine with reflected light, with light borrowed from the ancients. Greece appears to me to be the fountain of knowledge; Rome of elegance." RAMSAY. "I suppose Homer's 'Iliad' to be a collection of

(1) Mr. Ramsay was about Johnson's age. — C.

pieces which had been written before his time. I should like to see a translation of it in poetical prose, like the book of Ruth or Job." ROBERTSON. "Would you, Dr. Johnson, who are a master of the English language, but try your hand upon a part of it." JOHNSON. "Sir, you would not read it without the pleasure of verse."(1)

We talked of antiquarian researches. JOHNSON. "All that is really *known* of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. We *can* know no more than what the old writers have told us; yet what large books have we upon it, the whole of which, excepting such parts as are taken from those old writers, is all a dream, such as Whitaker's 'Manchester.' I have heard Henry's 'History of Britain' well spoken of; I am told it is carried on in separate divisions, as the civil, the military, the religious history. I wish much to have one branch well done, and that is the history of manners, of common life." ROBERTSON. "Henry should have applied his attention to that alone, which is enough for any man; and he might have found a great deal scattered in various books, had he read solely with that view. Henry erred in not selling his first

(1) This experiment, which Madame Dacier made in vain, has since been tried in our own language, by the editor of "Ossian;" and we must either think very meanly of his abilities, or allow that Dr. Johnson was in the right. And Mr. Cowper, a man of real genius, has miserably failed in his blank-verse translation. — B. — It is the fashion to call Cowper's a miserable failure, and by the side of Pope's fallacious brilliancy it undoubtedly seems deficient in poetical splendour; yet it is certainly the nearest portrait we have of Homer, and the more one reads it, the better it seems. — C. 1835.

volume at a moderate price to the booksellers, that they might have pushed him on till he had got reputation. I sold my 'History of Scotland' at a moderate price, as a work by which the booksellers might either gain or not; and Cadell has told me, that Miller and he have got six thousand pounds by it. I afterwards received a much higher price for my writings. An author should sell his first work for what the booksellers will give, till it shall appear whether he is an author of merit, or, which is the same thing as to purchase-money, an author who pleases the public."

Dr. Robertson expatiated on the character of a certain nobleman [1]; that he was one of the strongest-minded men that ever lived; that he would sit in company quite sluggish, while there was nothing to call forth his intellectual vigour; but the moment that any important subject was started, for instance, how this country is to be defended against a French invasion, he would rouse himself, and show his extraordinary talents, with the most powerful ability and animation. JOHNSON. "Yet this man cut his own throat. The true strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small. Now, I am told the King of Prussia will say to a servant, 'Bring me a bottle of such a wine, which came in such a year; it lies in such a corner of the cellars.' I would have a man great in great things, and elegant in little things." He said to me afterwards, when we were by our-

(1) Lord Clive. — C.

selves, "Robertson was in a mighty romantic humour; he talked of one whom he did not know; but I *downed* him with the King of Prussia." "Yes, Sir," said I, "you threw a *bottle* at his head."

An ingenious gentleman was mentioned, concerning whom both Robertson and Ramsay agreed that he had a constant firmness of mind; for, after a laborious day, and amidst a multiplicity of cares, and anxieties, he would sit down with his sisters, and be quite cheerful and good-humoured. Such a disposition, it was observed, was the happy gift of nature. JOHNSON. "I do not think so: a man has from nature a certain portion of mind; the use he makes of it depends upon his own free will. That a man has always the same firmness of mind, I do not say: because every man feels his mind less firm at one time than another; but I think, a man's being in a good or bad humour depends upon his will." I, however, could not help thinking that a man's humour is often uncontrollable by his will.

Johnson harangued against drinking wine. "A man," said he, "may choose whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance." Dr. Robertson (who is very companionable) was beginning to dissent as to the proscription of claret. JOHNSON (with a placid smile). "Nay, Sir, you shall not differ with me; as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in the most things, I am for knowledge and claret." ROBERTSON (holding a glass of generous claret in his hand). "Sir, I can only drink your health." JOHNSON. "Sir, I should be sorry if *you* should be

ever in such a state as to be able to do nothing more." ROBERTSON. "Dr. Johnson, allow me to say, that in one respect I have the advantage of you: when you were in Scotland you would not come to hear any of our preachers; whereas, when I am here, I attend your public worship without scruple, and, indeed, with great satisfaction." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that is not so extraordinary: the King of Siam sent ambassadors to Louis the Fourteenth, but Louis the Fourteenth sent none to the King of Siam." (1)

Here my friend for once discovered a want of knowledge or forgetfulness; for Louis the Fourteenth did send an embassy to the King of Siam (2), and the Abbé Choisi, who was employed in it, published an account of it in two volumes.

Next day, Thursday, April 30. (3), I found him

(1) Mrs. Piozzi confidently mentions this as having passed in Scotland. — *Anecdotes*, p. 62.

(2) The Abbé de Choisi was sent by Louis XIV. on an embassy to the King of Siam in 1683, with a view, it has been said, to convert the king of the country to Christianity. — M. — The Chevalier de Chaumont was the ambassador: the Abbé de Choisi was, as Boswell correctly states, only "employed in it," and it was in return of this mission that the King of Siam sent his embassy to Louis. — C.

(3) "April 30. 1778. Since I was fetched away from Streatham, the Journal (of engagements) stands thus: Saturday, Sir Joshua; Sunday, Mr. Hoole; Monday, Lord Lucan; Tuesday, Gen. Paoli; Wednesday, Mr. Ramsay; Thursday, Old Bailey; Friday, Club; Saturday, Sir Joshua; Sunday, Lady Lucan. Monday, pray let it be Streatham, and very early; do, now, let it be very early; for I may be carried away — just like Ganymede of Troy. . . . Do, now, let me know whether you will send for me — early — on Monday. But take some care, or your letter will not come till Tuesday." — *Letters to Mrs. Thrale*. There is a dinner given at the Old Bailey to the

at home by himself. JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's. BOSWELL. "What I admire in Ramsay, is his continuing to be so young." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, it is to be admired. I value myself upon this, that there is nothing of the old man in my conversation. I am now sixty-eight, and I have no more of it than at twenty-eight." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, would not you wish to know old age? He who is never an old man, does not know the whole of human life; for old age is one of the divisions of it." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, what talk is this?" BOSWELL. "I mean, Sir, the Sphinx's description of it: — morning, noon, and night. I would know night, as well as morning and noon." JOHNSON. "What Sir, would you know what it is to feel the evils of old age? Would you have the gout? Would you have decrepitude?" Seeing him heated, I would not argue any farther; but I was confident that I was in the right. I would, in due time, be a Nestor, an elder of the people; and there *should* be some difference between the conversation of twenty-eight and sixty-eight. (1) A grave picture should not be

judges, counsel, and a few guests. The venerable Mr. Chamberlain Clarke, now in his ninety-first year, remembers to have taken Johnson to this dinner, he being then sheriff. The judges were Blackstone and Eyre. Mr. Justice Blackstone conversed with Johnson on the subject of their absent friend, Sir Robert Chambers. — C.

(1) Johnson clearly meant (what the author has often else-

gay. There is a serene, solemn, placid old age. JOHNSON. "Mrs. Thrale's mother said of me what flattered me much. A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived; and said, 'They talk of *runts*, (that is, young cows.) (1) 'Sir, (said Mrs. Salusbury), Mr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts;' meaning that I was a man who would make the most of my situation, whatever I was." He added, "I think myself a very polite man."

On Saturday, May 2., I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation; but, owing to some circumstance which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of

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where mentioned), that he had none of the listlessness of old age; that he had the same *activity and energy of mind*, as formerly; not that a man of sixty-eight might dance in a public assembly with as much propriety as he could at twenty-eight. His conversation being the product of much various knowledge, great acuteness, and extraordinary wit, was equally well suited to every period of life; and as in his youth it probably did not exhibit any unbecoming levity, so certainly in his later years it was totally free from the garrulity and querulousness of old age. — M.

(1) Such is the signification of this word in Scotland, and, it should seem, in Wales. (See Skinner in *v.*) But the heifers of Scotland and Wales, when brought to England, being always smaller than those of this country, the word *runt* has acquired a secondary sense, and generally signifies a heifer diminutive in size, small beyond the ordinary growth of that animal; and in this sense alone the word is acknowledged by Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary. — M.

humour: and upon some imaginary offence (1) from me, he attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week; and, perhaps, might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled. To such unhappy chances are human friendships liable.

On Friday, May 8., I dined with him at Mr. Langton's. I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause. After dinner, when Mr. Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his

(1) Lord Wellesley has been so obliging as to give me the following account of the cause of this quarrel: "Boswell, one day at Sir Joshua's table, chose to pronounce a high-flown panegyric on the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and exclaimed, 'How delightful it must have been to have lived in the society of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Bolingbroke! We have no such society in our days.' SIR JOSHUA. 'I think, Mr. Boswell, you might be satisfied with your great friend's conversation.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, Boswell is right; every man wishes for preferment, and if Boswell had lived in those days, he would have obtained promotion.' SIR JOSHUA. 'How so, Sir?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, he would have had a high place in the Dunciad.' This anecdote Lord Wellesley heard from Mr. Thomas Sydenham, who received it from Mr. Knight, on the authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds himself." I, however, suspect, that this is but another version of the repartee of the same kind, in reference to the Dunciad, made in Sir Joshua's presence, though not at his house, some years before (see *antè*, Vol. III. p. 85.). Johnson's playful retort seems so much less offensive than fifty others, that Boswell relates himself to have endured patiently, that it is improbable that he should have resented it so deeply. The anecdote, in passing through the hands of Mr. Knight and Mr. Sydenham, may have lost its true date, and acquired something beyond its true expression. — C.

chair near to mine, and said, in a tone of conciliating courtesy, "Well, how have you done?" BOSWELL. "Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear Sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now, to treat me so —." He insisted that I had interrupted, which I assured him was not the case; and proceeded — "But why treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?" JOHNSON. "Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please." BOSWELL. "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present. I think this a pretty good image, Sir." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard." (1)

The truth is, there was no venom in the wounds which he inflicted at any time, unless they were irritated by some malignant infusion by other hands. We were instantly as cordial again as ever, and joined in hearty laugh at some ludicrous but innocent peculiarities of one of our friends. BOSWELL. "Do you think, Sir, it is always culpable to laugh at a man to his face?" JOHNSON. "Why,

(1) The simplicity with which Boswell repeats this flattery, without seeing that it was only a *peace-offering*, is very characteristic and amusing. — C.

Sir, that depends upon the man and the thing. If it is a slight man, and a slight thing, you may; for you take nothing valuable from him."

He said, "I read yesterday Dr. Blair's sermon on devotion, from the text 'Cornelius, a devout man.' His doctrine is the best limited, the best expressed: there is the most warmth without fanaticism, the most rational transport. There is one part of it which I disapprove, and I'd have him correct it; which is, that 'he who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven!' there are many good men whose fear of God predominates over their love. It may discourage. It was rashly said.(1) A noble sermon it is indeed. I wish Blair would come over to the church of England."

When Mr. Langton returned to us, the "flow of talk went on." An eminent author (2) being mentioned: JOHNSON. "He is not a pleasant man. His conversation is neither instructive nor brilliant.

(1) The passage referred to is, "Of what nature must that man's religion be, who professes to worship God and to believe in Christ, and yet raises his thoughts towards God and his Saviour without any warmth of gratitude or love? This is not the man whom you would choose for your bosom friend, or whose heart you would expect to answer with reciprocal warmth to yours; such a person must *as yet* be far from the kingdom of heaven."—*Blair's Sermons*, vol. i. p. 261. Dr. Johnson's remark is certainly just; and it may be, moreover, observed that, from Blair's expressions, and his reference to *human friendships and affections*, he might be understood to mean, that unless we feel the *same kind* of "warmth" and affection towards God that we do towards the objects of human love, we are far from the kingdom of heaven—an idea which seems to countenance fanaticism, and which every sober-minded Christian feels to be a mere play on words; for the love of God and the love of one's wife and friend are certainly not the *same* passion.—C.

(2) No doubt Dr. Robertson.—C.

He does not talk as if impelled by any fulness of knowledge or vivacity of imagination. His conversation is like that of any other sensible man. He talks with no wish either to inform or to hear, but only because he thinks it does not become —— —— to sit in a company and say nothing."

Mr. Langton having repeated the anecdote of Addison having distinguished between his powers in conversation and in writing, by saying, "I have only ninepence in my pocket; but I can draw for a thousand pounds;" — JOHNSON. "He had not that retort ready, Sir; he had prepared it before-hand." LANGTON (turning to me). "A fine surmise. Set a thief to catch a thief."

Johnson called the East Indians barbarians. BOSWELL. "You will except the Chinese, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "Have they not arts?" JOHNSON. "They have pottery." BOSWELL. "What do you say to the written characters of their language?" JOHNSON. "Sir, they have not an alphabet. They have not been able to form what all other nations have formed." BOSWELL. "There is more learning in their language than in any other, from the immense number of their characters." JOHNSON. "It is only more difficult from its rudeness; as there is more labour in hewing down a tree with a stone than with an axe."

He said, "I have been reading Lord Kames's 'Sketches of the History of Man.' In treating of severity of punishment, he mentions that of Madame Lapouchin, in Russia, but he does not give it fairly; for I have looked at Chappe D'Aute-

roche(1), from whom he has taken it. He stops where it is said that the spectators thought her innocent, and leaves out what follows, — that she nevertheless was guilty. Now this is being as culpable as one can conceive, to misrepresent fact in a book; and for what motive?(2) It is like one of those lies which people tell, one cannot see why. The woman's life was spared; and no punishment was too great for the favourite of an empress, who had conspired to dethrone her mistress." BOSWELL. "He was only giving a picture of the lady in her sufferings." JOHNSON. "Nay, don't endeavour to palliate this. Guilt is a principal feature in the picture. Kames is puzzled with a question that puzzled me when I was a very young man. Why is it that the interest of money is lower, when money is plentiful; for five pounds has the same proportion of value to a hundred pounds when money is plentiful, as when it is scarce? A lady explained it to me. It is (said she) because when money is plentiful there are so many more who have money to lend, that they bid down one another. Many have then a hundred pounds; and one says—Take mine rather than another's, and you shall have it at four *per cent.*" BOSWELL. "Does Lord Kames decide the question?" JOHNSON. "I think he leaves it as he found it." BOSWELL. "This must have been

(1) ["Journey into Siberia, made by order of the King of France; published in 1768."]

(2) The passage is to be found in b. i. sk. 5. The motive of Lord Kames for this certainly culpable suppression, was evidently to heighten our indignation at the barbarity of the punishment, of which he cites this as an unparalleled example.—C.

an extraordinary lady who instructed you, Sir. May I ask who she was?" JOHNSON. "Molly Aston (1), Sir, the sister of those ladies with whom you dined at Lichfield. — I shall be at home to-morrow." BOSWELL. "Then let us dine by ourselves at the Mitre, to keep up the old custom, 'the custom of the manor,' custom of the Mitre." JOHNSON. "Sir, so it shall be."

On Saturday, May 9., we fulfilled our purpose of dining by ourselves at the Mitre, according to the old custom. There was, on these occasions, a little circumstance of kind attention to Mrs. Williams, which must not be omitted. Before coming out, and leaving her to dine alone, he gave her her choice of a chicken, a sweetbread, or any other

(1) Johnson had an extraordinary admiration of this lady, notwithstanding she was a violent Whig. In answer to her high-flown speeches for *liberty*, he addressed to her the following epigram, of which I presume to offer a translation:

"Liber ut esse velim, suasisti, pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber — pulchra Maria, vale!"

Adieu, Maria! since you'd have me free;
For, who beholds thy charms a slave must be."

A correspondent of "The Gentleman's Magazine," who subscribes himself Sciolus, to whom I am indebted for several excellent remarks, observes, "The turn of Dr. Johnson's lines to Miss Aston, whose Whig principles he had been combating, appears to me to be taken from an ingenious epigram in the 'Menagiana,' vol. iii. p. 376., edit. 1716, on a young lady who appeared at a masquerade, *habillée en Jésuite*, during the fierce contentions of the followers of Molinos and Jansenius concerning free-will:

"On s'étonne ici que Caliste
Ait pris l'habit de Moliniste.
Puisque cette jeune beauté
Ote à chacun sa liberté,
N'est-ce pas une Janséniste?"

little nice thing, which was carefully sent to her from the tavern ready drest.

Our conversation to-day, I know not how, turned, I think, for the only time at any length, during our long acquaintance, upon the sensual intercourse between the sexes, the delight of which he ascribed chiefly to imagination. "Were it not for imagination, Sir," said he, "a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a duchess. But such is the adventitious charm of fancy, that we find men who have violated the best principles of society, and ruined their fame and their fortune, that they might possess a woman of rank." It would not be proper to record the particulars of such a conversation in moments of unreserved frankness, when nobody was present on whom it could have any hurtful effect. That subject, when philosophically treated, may surely employ the mind in a curious discussion, and as innocently as anatomy; provided that those who do treat it keep clear of inflammatory incentives.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"— we were soon engaged in very different speculation; humbly and reverently considering and wondering at the universal mystery of all things, as our imperfect faculties can now judge of them. "There are," said he, "innumerable questions to which the inquisitive mind can in this state receive no answer: Why do you and I exist? Why was this world created? Since it was to be created, why was it not created sooner?"

On Sunday, May 10, I supped with him at Mr

Hoole's (1), with Sir Joshua Reynolds. I have neglected the memorial of this evening, so as to remember no more of it than two particulars: one, that he strenuously opposed an argument by Sir Joshua, that virtue was preferable to vice, considering this life only; and that a man would be virtuous were it only to preserve his character; and that he expressed much wonder at the curious formation of the bat, a mouse with wings; saying, that it was almost as strange a thing in physiology, as if the fabulous dragon could be seen.

On Tuesday, May 12., I waited on the Earl of Marchmont, to know if his lordship would favour Dr. Johnson with information concerning Pope, whose Life he was about to write. Johnson had not flattered himself with the hopes of receiving any civility from this nobleman; for he said to me, when I mentioned Lord Marchmont as one who could tell him a great deal about Pope, — "Sir, he will tell *me* nothing." I had the honour of being known to his lordship, and applied to him of myself, without being commissioned by Johnson. His lordship behaved in the most polite and obliging manner, promised to tell all he recollected about Pope, and was so very courteous as to say, "Tell Dr. Johnson I have a great respect for him, and am ready to show it in any way I can. I am to be in the city to-morrow, and will call at his house as I return." His lordship however asked, "Will he write the 'Lives of the Poets' impartially? He

(1) See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 221. — C.

was the first that brought Whig and Tory into a dictionary. And what do you think of the definition of Excise? Do you know the history of his aversion to the word *transpire?*" Then taking down the folio Dictionary, he showed it with this censure on its secondary sense: 'To escape from secrecy to notice; a sense lately innovated from France, without necessity.' (1) "The truth was, Lord Bolingbroke, who left the Jacobites (2), first used it; therefore it was to be condemned. He should have shown what word would do for it, if it was unnecessary." I afterwards put the question to Johnson: "Why, Sir," said he, "*get abroad.*" BOSWELL. "That, Sir, is using two words." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no end to this. You may as well insist to have a word for old age." BOSWELL. "Well, Sir, *senectus.*" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, to insist always that there should be one word to express a thing in English, because there is one in another language (3), is to change the language."

(1) Few words, however, of modern introduction have had greater success than this — for it is not only in general, but even in *vulgar* use. Johnson's awkward substitute of "*get abroad*" does not seem to express exactly the same meaning: a secret may *get abroad* by design, by accident, by breach of confidence; but it is said to *transpire* when it becomes known by small indirect circumstances — by symptoms — by inferences. It is now often used in the direct sense of "*get abroad*," but, as appears to me, incorrectly. — C.

(2) The truth was, that Bolingbroke left and embraced *every* party in succession, —

"Was every thing by turns, and nothing long." — C.

(3) This is not just. Lord Marchmont and Boswell argued for having one *word* for one *idea*, and when the idea is a simple one, common to all mankind, like *old age*, the language which has no single expression for it, is, so far, imperfect. — C.

I availed myself of this opportunity to hear from his lordship many particulars both of Pope and Lord Bolingbroke, which I have in writing.

I proposed to Lord Marchmont, that he should revise Johnson's Life of Pope: "So," said his lordship, "you would put me in a dangerous situation. You know he knocked down Osborne, the bookseller." (1)

Elated with the success of my spontaneous exertion to procure material and respectable aid to Johnson for his very favourite work, "the Lives of the Poets," I hastened down to Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where he now was, that I might insure his being at home next day; and after dinner, when I thought he would receive the good news in the best humour, I announced it eagerly: "I have been at work for you to-day, Sir. I have been with Lord Marchmont. He bade me tell you he has a great respect for you, and will call on you to-morrow at one o'clock, and communicate all he knows about Pope." Here I paused, in full expectation that he would be pleased with this intelligence, would praise my active merit, and would be alert to embrace such an offer from a nobleman. But whether I had shown an over-exultation, which provoked his spleen; or whether he was seized with a suspicion that I had obtruded him on Lord Marchmont, and humbled him too much; or whether there was any thing more than an unlucky fit of ill-humour, I know not; but to my surprise the result was,—JOHNSON.

(1) See ante, Vol. I. p. 176. — C.

"I shall not be in town to-morrow. I don't care to know about Pope." MRS. THRALE (surprised as I was, and a little angry). "I suppose, Sir, Mr. Boswell thought, that as you are to write Pope's Life, you would wish to know about him." JOHNSON. "Wish! why yes. If it rained knowledge, I'd hold out my hand; but I would not give myself the trouble to go in quest of it." There was no arguing with him at the moment. Some time afterwards he said, "Lord Marchmont will call on me, and then I shall call on Lord Marchmont." Mrs. Thrale was uneasy at this unaccountable(1) caprice; and told me, that if I did not take care to bring about a meeting between Lord Marchmont and him, it would never take place, which would be a great pity. I sent a card to his lordship, to be left at Johnson's house, acquainting him, that Dr. Johnson could not be in town next day, but would do himself the honour of waiting on him at another time. I give this account fairly, as a specimen of that unhappy temper with which this great and good man had occasionally to struggle, from something morbid in his constitution. Let the most censorious of my readers suppose himself to have a violent fit of the toothache or to have received a severe stroke on the shin-bone, and when in such a state to be asked a question; and if he has any candour, he will not be surprised at the answers

(1) Not quite so unaccountable as Mr. Boswell seems to think. *His* intervention in this affair, *unsolicited* and *unauthorised*, exhibits the bustling vanity of his own character, and Johnson was unwilling to be dragged before Lord Marchmont by so headlong a master of the ceremonies. — C.

which Johnson sometimes gave in moments of irritation, which, let me assure them, is exquisitely painful. But it must not be erroneously supposed that he was, in the smallest degree, careless concerning any work which he undertook, or that he was generally thus peevish. It will be seen that in the following year he had a very agreeable interview with Lord Marchmont at his lordship's house; and this very afternoon he soon forgot any fretfulness, and fell into conversation as usual.

I mentioned a reflection having been thrown out against four peers for having presumed to rise in opposition to the opinion of the twelve judges, in a cause in the House of Lords (1), as if that were indecent. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no ground for censure. The peers are judges themselves: and supposing them really to be of a different opinion, they might from duty be in opposition to the judges, who were there only to be consulted."

In this observation I fully concurred with him; for, unquestionably, all the peers are vested with the highest judicial powers; and when they are confident that they understand a cause, are not obliged, nay, ought not to acquiesce in the opinion of the ordinary law judges, or even in that of those who from their studies and experience are called the law lords. I consider the peers in general as I do a jury, who ought to listen with respectful attention to the sages of the law; but if, after hearing them, they have a firm opinion of their own, are

(1) The occasion was Mr. Horne's writ of error. See ante, p. 164. — C.

bound, as honest men, to decide accordingly. Nor is it so difficult for them to understand even law questions as is generally thought, provided they will bestow sufficient attention upon them. This observation was made by my honoured relation the late Lord Cathcart, who had spent his life in camps and courts; yet assured me, that he could form a clear opinion upon most of the causes that came before the House of Lords, "as they were so well enucleated in the Cases."

Mrs. Thrale told us, that a curious clergyman of our acquaintance had discovered a licentious stanza, which Pope had originally in his "Universal Prayer," before the stanza, —

> "What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns us not to do," &c.

It was this: —

> "Can sins of moment claim the rod
> Of everlasting fires?
> And that offend great Nature's God
> Which Nature's self inspires?"

and that Dr. Johnson observed, "it had been borrowed from *Guarini*." There are, indeed, in *Pastor Fido*, many such flimsy superficial reasonings as that in the last two lines of this stanza.

BOSWELL. "In that stanza of Pope's, '*rod of fires*' is certainly a bad metaphor." MRS. THRALE. "And '*sins of moment*' is a faulty expression; for its true import is *momentous*, which cannot be intended." JOHNSON. "It must have been written '*of moments*.' Of *moment*, is *momentous*; of *moments*, *momentary*. I warrant you, however, Pope

wrote this stanza, and some friend struck it out. Boileau wrote some such thing, and Arnaud struck it out, saying '*Vous gagnerez deux ou trois impies, et perdrez je ne sçais combien d'honnêtes gens.*' These fellows want to say a daring thing, and don't know how to go about it. Mere poets know no more of fundamental principles than —." Here he was interrupted somehow. Mrs. Thrale mentioned Dryden. JOHNSON. "He puzzled himself about predestination. How foolish was it in Pope to give all his friendship to lords, who thought they honoured him by being with him; and to choose such lords as Burlington, and Cobham, and Bolingbroke! Bathurst was negative, a pleasing man; and I have heard no ill of Marchmont. And then always saying, 'I do not value you for being a lord;' which was a sure proof that he did. I never say I do not value Boswell more for being born to an estate, because I do not care." BOSWELL. "Nor for being a Scotchman?" "Nay, Sir, I do value you more for being a Scotchman. You are a Scotchman without the faults of Scotchmen. You would not have been so valuable as you are had you not been a Scotchman."

Talking of divorces, I asked if Othello's doctrine was not plausible: —

> "He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
> Let him not know 't, and he's not robb'd at all."

Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale joined against this. JOHNSON. "Ask any man if he'd wish not to know of such an injury." BOSWELL. "Would you tell

your friend to make him unhappy?" JOHNSON. "Perhaps, Sir, I should not; but that would be from prudence on my own account. A man would tell his father." BOSWELL. "Yes; because he would not have spurious children to get any share of the family inheritance." MRS. THRALE. "Or he would tell his brother." BOSWELL. "Certainly his *elder* brother. JOHNSON. "You would tell your friend of a woman's infamy, to prevent his marrying a prostitute: there is the same reason to tell him of his wife's infidelity when he is married, to prevent the consequences of imposition. It is a breach of confidence not to tell a friend." BOSWELL. "Would you tell Mr. ——?" (naming a gentleman (1) who assuredly was not in the least danger of such a miserable disgrace, though married to a fine woman.) JOHNSON. "No, Sir; because it would do no good: he is so sluggish, he'd never go to parliament and get through a divorce."

He said of one (2) of our friends, "He is ruining himself without pleasure. A man who loses at play, or who runs out his fortune at court, makes his estate less, in hopes of making it bigger (I am sure of this word, which was often used by him): but it is a sad thing to pass through the quagmire of parsimony to the gulf of ruin. To pass over the flowery path of extravagance is very well."

Amongst the numerous prints pasted on the

(1) I fear it will be but too evident at whose expense Mr Boswell chose to make so offensive an hypothesis. — C.

(2) No doubt Mr. Langton. — C.

walls of the dining-room at Streatham was Hogarth's "Modern Midnight Conversation." I asked him what he knew of Parson Ford, who made a conspicuous figure in the riotous group. (1) JOHNSON. "Sir, he was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country. I have been told he was a man of great parts; very profligate, but I never heard he was impious." BOSWELL. "Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?" JOHNSON. "Sir, it was believed. A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again, he met him a second time. When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some women from Ford; but he was not to tell what, or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back, and said he had delivered the message, and the women exclaimed, 'Then we are all undone!' Dr. Pellet, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the

(1) The acquiescence of Johnson, on this occasion, seems to authenticate the fact, that Ford was Hogarth's riotous parson. See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 46. — C.

truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible. My wife went to the Hummums; (it is a place where people get themselves cupped). I believe she went with intention to hear about this story of Ford. At first they were unwilling to tell her; but, after they had talked to her, she came away satisfied that it was true. To be sure, the man had a fever; and this vision may have been the beginning of it. But if the message to the women, and their behaviour upon it, were true as related, there was something supernatural. That rests upon his word; and there it remains."

After Mrs. Thrale was gone to bed, Johnson and I sat up late. We resumed Sir Joshua Reynolds's argument on the preceding Sunday, that a man would be virtuous, though he had no other motive than to preserve his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not true; for, as to this world, vice does not hurt a man's character." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, debauching a friend's wife will." JOHNSON. "No, Sir. Who thinks the worse of [Beauclerk] (1) for it?" BOSWELL. "Lord [Bolingbroke] was not his friend." JOHNSON. "That is only a circumstance, Sir; a slight distinction. He could not get into the house but by Lord [Bolingbroke.] A man is chosen knight of the shire not the less for having debauched ladies." BOSWELL. "What, Sir, if he debauched the ladies of gentlemen in the county, will not there be a general resentment against him?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. He will lose those

(1) See antè, Vol. III. p. 288. — C.

particular gentlemen; but the rest will not trouble their heads about it" (warmly). BOSWELL. "Well, Sir, I cannot think so." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, there is no talking with a man who will dispute what every body knows (angrily). Don't you know this?" BOSWELL. "No, Sir; and I wish to think better of your country than you represent it. I knew in Scotland a gentleman obliged to leave it for debauching a lady; and in one of our counties an earl's brother lost his election because he had debauched the lady of another earl in that county, and destroyed the peace of a noble family."

Still he would not yield. He proceeded: "Will you not allow, Sir, that vice does not hurt a man's character so as to obstruct his prosperity in life, when you know that [Lord Clive] (1) was loaded with wealth and honours? a man who had acquired his fortune by such crimes, that his consciousness of them impelled him to cut his own throat." BOSWELL. "You will recollect, Sir, that Dr. Robertson said he cut his throat because he was weary of still life; little things not being sufficient to move his great mind." JOHNSON (very angry). "Nay, Sir, what stuff is this! You had no more this opinion after Robertson said it than before. I know nothing more offensive than repeating what one knows to be foolish things, by way of continuing a dispute, to see what a man will answer, — to make him your butt!" (angrier still.) BOSWELL. "My dear Sir, I had no such intention as you seem to suspect;

(1) See *antè*, p. 190. — C.

I had not indeed. Might not this nobleman have felt every thing 'weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,' as Hamlet says?" JOHNSON. "Nay, if you are to bring in *gabble*, I'll talk no more. I will not, upon my honour." My readers will decide upon this dispute.

CHAPTER VII.

1778—1779.

Lord Kames. — Sir George Villiers's Ghost. — Innate Virtue.—Native Modesty.—Foreign Travel.—Lord Charlemont.—Country Life.—Manners of the Great. — Horne's "Letter to Dunning." — Dr. Mead. — Rasselas and Candide.—Francis's' Horace. — Modern Books of Travels. — Lord Chatham. — Vows. —Education. — Milton's "Tractate."— Locke. — Visit to Warley Camp. — Dr. Burney. — Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Discourses."—Publication of the "Lives of the Poets." — Death of Garrick.— Correspondence.

Next morning I stated to Mrs. Thrale at break fast, before he came down, the dispute of last night as to the influence of character upon success in life. She said he was certainly wrong; and told me that a baronet lost an election in Wales because he had debauched the sister of a gentleman in the county, whom he made one of his daughters invite as her companion at his seat in the country, when his lady and his other children were in London. But she would not encounter Johnson upon the subject.

I staid all this day with him at Streatham. He talked a great deal in very good humour.

Looking at Messrs. Dilly's splendid edition of Lord Chesterfield's miscellaneous works, he laughed,

and said, "Here are now two speeches ascribed to him, both of which were written by me: and the best of it is, they have found out that one is lik Demosthenes, and the other like Cicero."(1)

He censured Lord Kames's "Sketches of the History of Man," for misrepresenting Clarendon's account of the appearance of Sir George Villiers's ghost, as if Clarendon were weakly credulous; when the truth is, that Clarendon only says, that the story was upon a better foundation of credit than usually such discourses are founded upon; nay, speaks thus of the person who was reported to have seen the vision, "the poor man, *if he had been at all waking*;" which Lord Kames has omitted. He added, "In this book it is maintained that virtue is natural to man, and that if we would but consult our own hearts we should be virtuous. Now, after consulting our own hearts all we can, and with all the helps we have, we find how few of us are virtuous. This is saying a thing which all mankind know not to be true." BOSWELL. "Is not modesty natural?" JOHNSON. "I cannot say, Sir, as we find no people quite in a state of nature; but, I think, the more they are taught, the more modest they are. The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people; a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was, learning to be better satisfied with my own country. Time may be employed to more advantage from nineteen to twenty-four, almost in

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 172. — C.

any way than in travelling. When you set travelling against mere negation, against doing nothing, it is better to be sure; but how much more would a young man improve were he to study during those years. Indeed, if a young man is wild, and must run after women and bad company, it is better this should be done abroad, as, on his return, he can break off such connections, and begin at home a new man, with a character to form, and acquaintance to make. How little does travelling supply to the conversation of any man who has travelled! how little to Beauclerk!" BOSWELL. "What say you to Lord ——— (1)" JOHNSON. "I never but once heard him talk of what he had seen, and that was of a large serpent in one of the pyramids of Egypt." BOSWELL. "Well, I happened to hear him tell the same thing, which made me mention him."

I talked of a country life. JOHNSON. "Were I to live in the country, I would not devote myself to the acquisition of popularity; I would live in a much better way, much more happily; I would have my time at my own command." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, is it not a sad thing to be at a distance from all our literary friends?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you will by-and-by have enough of this conversation, which now delights you so much."

As he was a zealous friend of subordination, he was at all times watchful to repress the vulgar cant against the manners of the great. "High people,

(1) James, first earl of Charlemont. His lordship was, to the last, in the habit of telling the story alluded to rather too often. — C.

Sir," said he, "are the best: take a hundred ladies of quality, you'll find them better wives, better mothers, more willing to sacrifice their own pleasure to their children, than a hundred other women. Tradeswomen (I mean the wives of tradesmen) in the city, who are worth from ten to fifteen thousand pounds, are the worst creatures upon the earth, grossly ignorant, and thinking viciousness fashionable. Farmers, I think, are often worthless fellows. Few lords will cheat; and, if they do, they'll be ashamed of it: farmers cheat, and are not ashamed of it: they have all the sensual vices too of the nobility, with cheating into the bargain. There is as much fornication and adultery amongst farmers as amongst noblemen." BOSWELL. "The notion of the world, Sir, however, is, that the morals of women of quality are worse than those in lower stations." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; the licentiousness of one woman of quality makes more noise than that of a number of women in lower stations: then, Sir, you are to consider the malignity of women in the city against women of quality, which will make them believe any thing of them, such as that they call their coachmen to bed. No, Sir; so far as I have observed, the higher in rank, the richer ladies are, they are the better instructed, and the more virtuous."

This year the Reverend Mr. Horne published his "Letter to Mr. Dunning on the English Particle." Johnson read it; and though not treated in it with sufficient respect, he had candour enough to say to Mr. Seward, "Were I to make a new edition of my

Dictionary, I would adopt several (1) of Mr. Horne's etymologies. I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel; he has too much literature for that." (2)

On Saturday, May 16., I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's with Mr. Langton, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Higgins, and some others. I regret very feelingly every instance of my remissness in recording his *memorabilia;* I am afraid it is the condition of humanity (as Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, once observed to me, after having made an admirable speech in the House of Commons, which was highly applauded, but which he afterwards perceived might have been better), "that we are more uneasy from thinking of our wants, than happy in thinking of our acquisitions." This is an unreasonable mode of disturbing our tranquillity, and should be corrected: let me then comfort myself with the large treasure of Johnson's conversation which I have preserved for my own enjoyment and that of the world, and let me exhibit what I have upon each occasion, whether more or less, whether a bulse, or only a few sparks of a diamond.

He said, "Dr. Mead lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man." (3)

(1) In Mr. Horne Tooke's enlargement of that "Letter," which he has since published with the title of "Ἔπεα πτερόεντα, or, The Diversions of Purley," he mentions this compliment, as if Dr. Johnson, instead of *several* of his etymologies, had said *all.* His recollection having thus magnified it, shows how ambitious he was of the approbation of so great a man.

(2) See *antè*, p. 165. and 206. — C

(3) Dr. Richard Mead was born in 1673, and died in 1754. His collection of books, pictures, and coins (which sold for upwards of 16,000*l.*), were, during his life, most liberally open to

The disaster of General Burgoyne's army([1]) was then the common topic of conversation. It was asked why piling their arms was insisted upon as a matter of such consequence, when it seemed to be a circumstance so inconsiderable in itself. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a French author says, '*Il y a beaucoup de puérilités dans la guerre.*' All distinctions are trifles, because great things can seldom occur, and those distinctions are settled by custom. A savage would as willingly have his meat sent to him in the kitchen, as eat it at the table here: as men become civilised, various modes of denoting honourable preference are invented."

He this day made the observations upon the similarity between "Rasselas" and "Candide;" which I have inserted in its proper place([2]), when considering his admirable philosophical romance. He said, "Candide," he thought, had more power in it than any thing that Voltaire had written.

He said, "The lyrical part of Horace never can be perfectly translated; so much of the excellence is in the numbers and expression. Francis has done it the best; I'll take his, five out of six, against them all."

On Sunday, May 17., I presented to him Mr. Fullarton, of Fullarton, who has since distinguished himself so much in India([3]), to whom he naturally

public curiosity. He was much visited by the literati and foreigners, and did certainly live in the "sun-shine of life." — C.

([1]) Its surrender at Saratoga, October, 1777. — C.

([2]) See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 105. — C.

([3]) [In 1787, Mr. Fullarton published a "View of the English Interests in India."]

talked of travels, as Mr. Brydone accompanied him in his tour to Sicily and Malta. He said, "The information which we have from modern travellers is much more authentic than what we had from ancient travellers: ancient travellers guessed; modern travellers measure. The Swiss admit that there is but one error in Stanyan. (1) If Brydone were more attentive to his Bible, he would be a good traveller." (2)

He said, "Lord Chatham was a *Dictator;* he possessed the power of putting the state in motion; now there is no power, all order is relaxed." BOSWELL. "Is there no hope of a change to the better?" JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, when we are weary of this relaxation. So the city of London will appoint its mayors again by seniority." BOSWELL. "But is not that taking a mere chance for having a good or a bad mayor?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but the evil of competition is greater than that of the worst mayor that can come: besides, there is no more reason to suppose that the choice of a rabble will be right, than that chance will be right."

On Tuesday, May 19., I was to set out for Scotland in the evening. He was engaged to dine with me at Mr. Dilly's; I waited upon him to remind him of his appointment and attend him thither; he gave me some salutary counsel, and recommended vigorous resolution against any deviation from

(1) [Temple Stanyan, author of the "Grecian History." His "Account of Switzerland" was published in 1714.]

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 103.]

moral duty. BOSWELL. "But you would not have me to bind myself by a solemn obligation?" JOHNSON (much agitated). "What! a vow!—O, no, Sir, a vow is a horrible thing! it is a snare for sin. The man who cannot go to heaven without a vow, may go——"(1). Here, standing erect in the middle of his library, and rolling grand, his pause was truly a curious compound of the solemn and the ludicrous: he half-whistled in his usual way when pleasant, and he paused as if checked by *religious* awe. Methought he would have added, *to hell*, but was restrained. I humoured the dilemma. "What, Sir!" said I, "'*In cœlum jusseris ibit?*'" alluding to his imitation of it,—

"And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes."

I had mentioned to him a slight fault in his noble "Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal," a too near recurrence of the verb *spread* in his description of the young enthusiast at college:—

"Through all his veins the fever of renown
Spreads from the strong contagion of the gown;
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours *spread*,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head."

He had desired me to change *spreads* to *burns*; but for perfect authenticity, I now had it done with his own hand."(2) I thought this alteration not

(1) See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 7.—C.

(2) The slip of paper on which he made the correction is deposited by me in the noble library to which it relates, and to which I have presented other pieces of his handwriting.—B.—Yet, strange to say, the correction has never been made in any

only cured the fault, but was more poetical, as it might carry an allusion to the shirt by which Hercules was inflamed.

We had a quiet, comfortable meeting at Mr. Dilly's; nobody there but ourselves. Mr. Dilly mentioned somebody having wished that Milton's "Tractate on Education" should be printed along with his Poems in the edition of the English Poets then going on. JOHNSON. "It would be breaking in upon the plan; but would be of no great consequence. So far as it would be any thing, it would be wrong. Education in England has been in danger of being hurt by two of its greatest men, Milton and Locke. Milton's plan is impracticable, and I suppose has never been tried. Locke's, I fancy, has been tried often enough, but is very imperfect; it gives too much to one side, and too little to the other; it gives too little to literature.—I shall do what I can for Dr. Watts; but my materials are very scanty. His poems are by no means his best works; I cannot praise his poetry itself highly, but I can praise its design."

My illustrious friend and I parted with assurances of affectionate regard.

I wrote to him on the 25th of May, from Thorpe, in Yorkshire, one of the seats of Mr. Bosville, and gave him an account of my having passed a day at Lincoln, unexpectedly, and therefore without having

of the subsequent editions of the poem. Nay, the Oxford edition observes upon it in a note, but does not correct the text. —C.

any letters of recommendation, that I had been honoured with civilities from the Reverend Mr. Simpson, an acquaintance of his, and Captain Broadley, of the Lincolnshire militia; but more particularly from the Reverend Dr. Gordon, the chancellor, who first received me with great politeness as a stranger, and, when I informed him who I was, entertained me at his house with the most flattering attention: I also expressed the pleasure with which I had found that our worthy friend, Langton, was highly esteemed in his own county town.

LETTER 322. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, June 18. 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—* * * Since my return to Scotland, I have been again at Lanark, and have had more conversation with Thomson's sister. It is strange that Murdoch, who was his intimate friend, should have mistaken his mother's maiden name, which he says was Hume, whereas Hume was the name of his grandmother by the mother's side. His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter [1], a daughter of Mr. Trotter of Fogo, a small proprietor of land. Thomson had one brother, whom he had with him in England as his amanuensis; but he was seized with a consumption, and having returned to Scotland, to try what his native air would do for him, died young. He had three sisters: one married to Mr. Bell, minister of the parish of Strathaven; one to Mr. Craig, father of the ingenious architect, who gave the plan of the New Town of Edinburgh; and one to Mr. Thomson, master of the grammar-school at

(1) Dr. Johnson was by no means attentive to minute accuracy in his "Lives of the Poets;" for, notwithstanding my having detected this mistake, he continued it.

Lanark. He was of a humane and benevolent disposition; not only sent valuable presents to his sisters, but a yearly allowance in money, and was always wishing to have it in his power to do them more good. Lord Lyttelton's observation, that 'he loathed much to write,' was very true. His letters to his sister, Mrs. Thomson, were not frequent; and in one of them he says, 'All my friends who know me, know how backward I am to write letters; and never impute the negligence of my hand to the coldness of my heart.' I send you a copy of the last letter which she had from him; she never heard that he had any intention of going into holy orders. From this late interview with his sister, I think much more favourably of him, as I hope you will. I am eager to see more of your Prefaces to the Poets: I solace myself with the few proof-sheets which I have.

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's 'Annals,' which you will please to return to me as soon as you conveniently can. He says, 'he wishes you would cut a little deeper;' but he may be proud that there is so little occasion to use the critical knife. I ever am, my dear Sir, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

Mr. Langton has been pleased, at my request, to favour me with some particulars of Dr. Johnson's visit to Warley-camp, where this gentleman was at the time stationed as a captain in the Lincolnshire militia. I shall give them in his own words in a letter to me.

"It was in the summer of the year 1778, that he complied with my invitation to come down to the camp at Warley, and he staid with me about a week; the scene appeared, notwithstanding a great degree of ill health that he seemed to labour under, to interest and amuse him, as agreeing with the disposition that I

believe you know he constantly manifested towards inquiring into subjects of the military kind. He sate, with a patient degree of attention, to observe the proceedings of a regimental court-martial, that happened to be called in the time of his stay with us; and one night, as late as at eleven o'clock, he accompanied the major of the regiment in going what are styled the *rounds*, where he might observe the forms of visiting the guards, for the seeing that they and their sentries are ready in their duty on their several posts. He took occasion to converse at times on military topics, once in particular, that I see the mention of, in your '*Journal* of a Tour to the Hebrides,' which lies open before me (1), as to gunpowder; which he spoke of to the same effect, in part, that you relate.

"On one occasion, when the regiment were going through their exercise, he went quite close to the men at one of the extremities of it, and watched all their practices attentively; and, when he came away, his remark was, 'The men indeed do load their muskets and fire with wonderful celerity.' He was likewise particular in requiring to know what was the weight of the musket balls in use, and within what distance they might be expected to take effect when fired off.

"In walking among the tents, and observing the difference between those of the officers and private men, he said, that the superiority of accommodation of the better conditions of life, to that of the inferior ones, was never exhibited to him in so distinct a view. The civilities paid to him in the camp were, from the gentlemen of the Lincolnshire regiment, one of the officers of which accommodated him with a tent in which he slept; and from General Hall, who very courteously invited him to dine with him, where he appeared to be very well pleased with his entertainment and the civili-

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 129.

ties he received on the part of the General (1); the attention likewise of the General's aide-de-camp, Captain Smith, seemed to be very welcome to him, as appeared by their engaging in a great deal of discourse together. The gentlemen of the East-York regiment likewise, on being informed of his coming, solicited his company at dinner, but by that time he had fixed his departure, so that he could not comply with the invitation."

LETTER 323. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, July 3. 1778.

"SIR,—I have received two letters from you, of which the second complains of the neglect shown to the first. You must not tie your friends to such punctual correspondence. You have all possible assurances of my affection and esteem; and there ought to be no need of reiterated professions. When it may happen that I can give you either counsel or comfort, I hope it will never happen to me that I should neglect you; but you must not think me criminal or cold, if I say nothing when I have nothing to say.

"You are now happy enough. Mrs. Boswell is recovered; and I congratulate you upon the probability of her long life. If general approbation will add any thing to your enjoyment, I can tell you that I have heard you mentioned as *a man whom every body likes*. I think life has little more to give.

"Langton has gone to his regiment. He has laid down his coach, and talks of making more contractions of his expense: how he will succeed, I know not. It is difficult to reform a household gradually; it may be done better by a system totally new. I am afraid he has always something to hide. When we pressed him

(1) When I one day at court expressed to General Hall my sense of the honour he had done my friend he politely answered, "Sir, I did *myself* honour."

to go to Langton, he objected the necessity of attending his navigation (1); yet he could talk of going to Aberdeen (2), a place not much nearer his navigation. I believe he cannot bear the thought of living at Langton in a state of diminution; and of appearing among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood *shorn of his beams*. This is natural, but it is cowardly. What I told him of the increasing expense of a growing family, seems to have struck him. He certainly had gone on with very confused views, and we have, I think, shown him that he is wrong; though, with the common deficience of advisers, we have not shown him how to do right.

"I wish you would a little correct or restrain your imagination, and imagine that happiness, such as life admits, may be had at other places as well as London. Without affecting Stoicism, it may be said, that it is our business to exempt ourselves as much as we can from the power of external things. There is but one solid basis of happiness; and that is, the reasonable hope of a happy futurity. This may be had everywhere.

"I do not blame your preference to London to other places, for it is really to be preferred, if the choice is free; but few have the choice of their place, or their manner of life; and mere pleasure ought not to be the prime motive of action.

"Mrs. Thrale, poor thing, has a daughter. Mr. Thrale dislikes the times, like the rest of us. Mrs. Williams is sick; Mrs. Desmoulins is poor. I have miserable nights. Nobody is well but Mr. Levett. I am, dear Sir, your most, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) The Wey canal, from Guildford to Weybridge, in which he had a considerable share, which his grandson now possesses. — C.

(2) His lady and family, it appears, were in Scotland at this period. — C.

In the course of this year there was a difference between him and his friend Mr. Strahan; the particulars of which it is unnecessary to relate. Their reconciliation was communicated to me in a letter from Mr. Strahan in the following words: —

"The notes I showed you that past between him and me were dated in March last. The matter lay dormant till 27th July, when he wrote to me as follows: —

LETTER 324. TO WILLIAM STRAHAN, ESQ.

'SIR, — It would be very foolish for us to continue strangers any longer. You can never by persistency make wrong right. If I resented too acrimoniously, I resented only to yourself. Nobody ever saw or heard what I wrote. You saw that my anger was over; for in a day or two I came to your house. I have given you a longer time; and I hope you have made so good use of it, as to be no longer on evil terms with, Sir, yours, &c. SAM. JOHNSON.'

"On this I called upon him: and he has since dined with me."

After this time, the same friendship as formerly continued between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Strahan. My friend mentioned to me a little circumstance of his attention, which, though we may smile at it, must be allowed to have its foundation in a nice and true knowledge of human life. "When I write to Scotland," said he, "I employ Strahan to frank my letters, that he may have the consequence of appearing a parliament-man among his countrymen."

LETTER 325. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Oct. 15. 1778.

"As to Dr. Collier's [1] epitaph, Nollekens has had it so long, that I have forgotten how long. You never had it. There is a print of Mrs. Montague, and I shall think myself very ill rewarded for my love and admiration if she does not give me one; she will give it nobody in whom it will excite more respectful sentiments. But I never could get any thing from her but by pushing a face; and so, if you please, you may tell her.

"When I called the other day at Burney's, I found only the young ones at home; at last came the doctor and madam, from a dinner in the country, to tell how they had been robbed as they returned. The doctor saved his purse, but gave them three guineas and some silver, of which they returned him three-and-sixpence, unasked, to pay the turnpike.

"I have sat twice to Sir Joshua, and he seems to like his own performance. He has projected another, in which I am to be busy; but we can think on it at leisure.

"Mrs. Williams is come home better, and the habitation is all concord and harmony; only Mr. Levett harbours discontent. With Dr. Lawrence's consent, I have, for the two last nights, taken musk: the first night was a worse night than common, the second, a better; but not so much better as that I dare ascribe any virtue to the medicine. I took a scruple each time."

"Oct. 31. 1778.

"Sir Joshua has finished my picture, and it seems to please every body, but I shall wait to see how it

(1) Dr. Collier, of the Commons, an early friend of Mrs. Thrale's, who died 23d May, 1777. — C.

pleases you. To-day Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins had a scold, and Williams was going away; but I bid her *not turn tail*, and she came back, and rather got the upper hand."

LETTER 326. TO CAPTAIN LANGTON (1),
Warley-Camp.

"Oct. 31. 1778.

"DEAR SIR, — When I recollect how long ago I was received with so much kindness at Warley common, I am ashamed that I have not made some inquiries after my friends.

"Pray how many sheep-stealers did you convict? and how did you punish them? When are you to be cantoned in better habitations? The air grows cold, and the ground damp. Longer stay in the camp cannot be without much danger to the health of the common men, if even the officers can escape.

"You see that Dr. Percy is now dean of Carlisle; above five hundred a year, with a power of presenting himself to some good living. He is provided for. The session of the Club is to commence with that of the parliament. Mr. Banks (2) desires to be admitted; he will be a very honourable accession.

"Did the king please you (3)? The Coxheath men, I think, have some reason to complain. (4) Reynolds says your camp is better than theirs. I hope you find yourself able to encounter this weather. Take care of

(1) Dr. Johnson here addresses his worthy friend, Bennet Langton, Esq., by his title as Captain of the Lincolnshire Militia, in which he has since been most deservedly raised to the rank of Major.

(2) Afterwards Sir Joseph. — C.

(3) His Majesty and the Queen visited Warley Camp on the 20th October. — C.

(4) Of the king's not visiting that camp as well as Warley; which, however, he did, on the 3d November. — C.

your own health; and, as you can, of your men. Be pleased to make my compliments to all the gentlemen whose notice I have had, and whose kindness I have experienced. I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him on the 18th of August, the 18th of September, and the 6th of November; informing him of my having had another son born, whom I had called James (1); that I had passed some time at Auchinleck; that the Countess of Loudoun, now in her ninety-ninth year, was as fresh as when he saw her, and remembered him with respect; and that his mother by adoption, the Countess of Eglintoune, had said to me, "Tell Mr. Johnson, I love him exceedingly;" that I had again suffered much from bad spirits; and that as it was very long since I heard from him, I was not a little uneasy.

The continuance of his regard for his friend, Dr. Burney, appears from the following letters:—

LETTER 327. TO THE REV. DR. WHEELER (2), *Oxford.*

"London, Nov. 2. 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—Dr. Burney, who brings this paper, is engaged in a History of Music; and having been

(1) This was the gentleman who contributed a few notes to this work. He was of Brazennose College, and a Vinerian Fellow, and died in February 1822, at his chambers, in the Temple.—HALL.—I had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He published an edition of Shakspeare; was very convivial; and in other respects like his father—though altogether on a smaller scale.—C.

(2) Benjamin Wheeler was entered at Trinity College, November 12. 1751. In 1776 he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ-church.—HALL.

told by Dr. Markham of some MSS. relating to his subject, which are in the library of your college, is desirous to examine them. He is my friend; and therefore I take the liberty of entreating your favour and assistance in his inquiry; and can assure you, with great confidence, that if you knew him he would not want any intervenient solicitation to obtain the kindness of one who loves learning and virtue as you love them.

"I have been flattering myself all the summer with the hope of paying my annual visit to my friends; but something has obstructed me: I still hope not to be long without seeing you. I should be glad of a little literary talk; and glad to show you, by the frequency of my visits, how eagerly I love it, when you talk it. I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 328. TO THE REV. DR. EDWARDS(1), *Oxford.*

"London, Nov. 2. 1778.

"SIR, —The bearer, Dr. Burney, has had some account of a Welsh manuscript in the Bodleian library, from which he hopes to gain some materials for his History of Music; but being ignorant of the language, is at a loss where to find assistance. I make no doubt but you, Sir, can help him through his difficulties, and therefore take the liberty of recommending him to your favour, as I am sure you will find him a man worthy of every civility that can be shown, and every benefit that can be conferred.

"But we must not let Welsh drive us from Greek. What comes of Xenophon? (2) If you do not like the

(1) Edward Edwards entered at Jesus College, 1743, æt. 17; M. A. 1749; B. D. 1756; and D. D. 1760. — HALL.

(2) Dr. Edwards was preparing an edition of Xenophon's Memorabilia, which, however, he did not live to complete. —C. [It was published in 1785, with a preface by Dr. Owen.]

trouble of publishing the book, do not let your commentaries be lost; contrive that they may be published somewhere. I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

These letters procured Dr. Burney great kindness and friendly offices from both of these gentlemen, not only on that occasion, but in future visits to the university. The same year Dr. Johnson not only wrote to Joseph Warton in favour of Dr. Burney's youngest son, who was to be placed in the college of Winchester, but accompanied him when he went thither.

We surely cannot but admire the benevolent exertions of this great and good man, especially when we consider how grievously he was afflicted with bad health, and how uncomfortable his home was made by the perpetual jarring of those whom he charitably accommodated under his roof. He has sometimes suffered me to talk jocularly of his group of females, and call them his *Seraglio*. He thus mentions them, together with honest Levett, in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale: "Williams hates every body; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll (1) loves none of them." (2)

(1) Miss Carmichael.—B.—I have not learned how this lady was connected with Dr. Johnson. It was no doubt his domestic experience which prompted his complimentary exclamation to Hannah More and her four sisters, "*What! five women live happily together!!*—*More's Life*, v. i. p. 67.—C. 1835.

(2) These connexions exposed him to trouble and incessant solicitation, which he bore well enough; but his inmates were enemies to his peace, and occasioned him great disquiet: the jealousy that subsisted among them rendered his dwelling irksome to him, and he seldom approached it, after an evening's

LETTER 329. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Nov. 21. 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—It is indeed a long time since I wrote, and I think you have some reason to complain; however, you must not let small things disturb you, when you have such a fine addition to your happiness as a new boy, and I hope your lady's health restored by bringing him. It seems very probable that a little care will now restore her, if any remains of her complaints are left.

"You seem, if I understand your letter, to be gaining ground at Auchinleck, an incident that would give me great delight.

"When any fit of anxiety, or gloominess, or perversion of mind lays hold upon you, make it a rule not to publish it by complaints, but exert your whole care to hide it; by endeavouring to hide it, you will drive it away. Be always busy.

"The Club is to meet with the parliament; we talk

conversation abroad, but with the dread of finding it a scene of [illegible] and of having his ears filled with the complaints of Mrs. [illegible] of Frank's neglect of his duty and inattention to the [illegible]s of his master, and of Frank against Mrs. Williams, for the authority she assumed over him, and exercised with an unwarrantable severity. Even those intruders who had taken shelter under his roof, and who, in his absence from home, brought thither their children, found cause to murmur; "their provision of food was scanty, or their dinners ill dressed;" all which he chose to endure, rather than put an end to their clamours by ridding his home of such thankless and troublesome guests. Nay, so insensible was he of the ingratitude of those whom he suffered thus to hang upon him, and among whom he may be said to have divided an income which was little more than sufficient for his own support, that he would submit to reproach and personal affront from some of them; even Levett would sometimes insult him, and Mrs. Williams, in her paroxysms of rage, has been known to drive him from her presence.—HAWKINS.

of electing Banks, the traveller; he will be a reputable member. Langton has been encamped with his company of militia on Warley-common; I spent five days amongst them; he signalised himself as a diligent officer, and has very high respect in the regiment. He presided when I was there at a court-martial; he is now quartered in Hertfordshire; his lady and little ones are in Scotland. Paoli came to the camp, and commended the soldiers.

"Of myself I have no great matters to say: my health is not restored; my nights are restless and tedious. The best night that I have had these twenty years was at Fort Augustus

"I hope soon to send you a few Lives to read. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate, SAM. JOHNSON."

About this time the Reverend Mr. John Hussey, who had been some time in trade, and was then a clergyman of the church of England, being about to undertake a journey to Aleppo, and other parts of the East, which he accomplished, Dr. Johnson (who had long been in habits of intimacy with him) honoured him with the following letter:—

LETTER 380. TO MR. JOHN HUSSEY.

"Dec. 29. 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the 'Grammar,' and have left you two books more, by which I hope to be remembered: write my name in them; we may, perhaps, see each other no more: you part with my good wishes, nor do I despair of seeing you return. Let no opportunities of vice corrupt you; let no bad example seduce you; let the blindness of Mahometans

confirm you in Christianity. God bless you. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson this year expressed great satisfaction at the publication of the first volume of "Discourses to the Royal Academy," by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whom he always considered as one of his literary school. Much praise indeed is due to those excellent Discourses, which are so universally admired, and for which the author received from the Empress of Russia a gold snuff-box, adorned with her profile in *bas relief*, set in diamonds; and containing, what is infinitely more valuable, a slip of paper, on which are written, with her imperial majesty's own hand, the following words: —"*Pour le Chevalier Reynolds, en témoignage du contentement que j'ai ressentie à la lecture de ses excellens Discours sur la Peinture.*"

This year, Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgment, or imagination, was not in the least abated; for this year came out the first four volumes of his "Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets *," published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came out in the year 1780. The poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copyright, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the House of Lords against the perpetuity of literary property. We have his own au-

thority (1), that by his recommendation the ems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection. Of this work I shall speak more particularly hereafter.

LETTER 331. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 2. 1779.

"DEAR MADAM, — Now the new year is come, of which I wish you and dear Mrs. Gastrel many and many returns, it is fit that I give you some account of the year past. In the beginning of it I had a difficulty of breathing, and other illness, from which, however, I by degrees recovered, and from which I am now tolerably free. In the spring and summer I flattered myself that I should come to Lichfield, and forebore to write till I could tell of my intentions with some certainty, and one thing or other making the journey always improper, as I did not come, I omitted to write, till at last I grew afraid of hearing ill news. But the other day Mr. Prujean (2) called and left word, that you, dear Madam, are grown better; and I know not when I heard any thing that pleased me so much. I shall now long more and more to see Lichfield, and partake the happiness of your recovery.

"Now you begin to mend, you have great encouragement to take care of yourself. Do not omit any thing that can conduce to your health, and when I come, I shall hope to enjoy with you, and dearest Mrs. Gastrel, many pleasing hours. Do not be angry at my long omission to write, but let me hear how you both do, for you will write to nobody, to whom your welfare will give more pleasure, than to, dearest Madam, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Life of Watts.

(2) Mr. Prujean married the youngest of the Misses Aston. — HARWOOD.

LETTER 332. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 2. 1779.

"DEAREST LOVE,—Though I have so long omitted to write, I will omit it no longer. I hope the new year finds you not worse than you have formerly been; and I wish that many years may pass over you without bringing either pain or discontent. For my part, I think my health, though not good, yet rather better than when I left you.

"My purpose was to have paid you my annual visit in the summer, but it happened otherwise, not by any journey another way, for I have never been many miles from London, but by such hindrances as it is hard to bring to any account.

"Do not follow my bad example, but write to me soon again, and let me know of you what you have to tell; I hope it is all good.

"Please to make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Adey, and Miss Adey, and all the ladies and gentlemen that frequent your mansion.

"If you want any books, or any thing else that I can send you, let me know. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 22d of January, I wrote to him on several topics, and mentioned, that as he had been so good as to permit me to have the proof sheets of his "Lives of the Poets," I had written to his servant, Francis, to take care of them for me.

LETTER 333. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 2. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Garrick's death is a striking event; not that we should be surprised with the death

of any man who has lived sixty-two years (1); but because there was a *vivacity* in our late celebrated friend, which drove away the thoughts of *death* from any association with *him*. I am sure you will be tenderly affected with his departure, and I would wish to hear from you upon the subject. I was obliged to him in my days of effervescence in London, when poor Derrick was my governor; and since that time I received many civilities from him. Do you remember how pleasing it was, when I received a letter from him at Inverary, upon our first return to civilised living after our Hebridean journey? I shall always remember him with affection as well as admiration.

"On Saturday last, being the 30th of January, I drank coffee and old port, and had solemn conversation with the Reverend Mr. Falconer, a nonjuring bishop, a very learned and worthy man. He gave two toasts, which you will believe I drank with cordiality, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Flora Macdonald. I sat about four hours with him, and it was really as if I had been living in the last century. The episcopal church of Scotland, though faithful to the royal house of Stuart, has never accepted of any *congé d'élire* since the revolution; it is the only true episcopal church in Scotland, as it has its own succession of bishops. For as to the episcopal clergy, who take the oaths to the present government, they indeed follow the rites of the church of England, but, as Bishop Falconer observed, 'they are not *episcopals*; for they are under no bishop, as a bishop cannot have authority beyond his diocese.' This venerable gentleman did me the honour to dine with me yes-

(1) On Mr. Garrick's monument in Lichfield Cathedral, he is said to have died, "aged 64 years." But it is a mistake, and Mr. Boswell is perfectly correct. Garrick was baptized at Hereford, February 28, 1716-17, and died at his house in London, January 20, 1779. The inaccuracy of lapidary inscriptions is well known. — M. The inscription, as given in Harwood's *History of Lichfield*, has *sixty-three* years. — C.

terday, and he laid his hands upon the heads of my little ones. We had a good deal of curious literary conversation, particularly about Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, with whom he lived in great friendship.

"Any fresh instance of the uncertainty of life makes one embrace more closely a valuable friend. My dear and much respected Sir, may God preserve you long in this world while I am in it. I am ever, your much obliged, and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 334. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"Feb. 15. 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM,—I have never deserved to be treated as you treat me. When you employed me before, I undertook your affair [1] and succeeded, but then I succeeded by choosing a proper time, and a proper time I will try to choose again.

"I have about a week's work to do, and then I shall come to live in town, and will first wait on you in Dover-street. You are not to think that I neglect you, for your nieces will tell you how rarely they have seen me. I will wait on you as soon as I can, and yet you must resolve to talk things over without anger, and you must leave me to catch opportunities, and be assured, dearest dear, that I should have very little enjoyment of that day in which I had neglected any opportunity of doing good to you. I am, dearest Madam, your humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 335. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, March 4, 1779.

"MY DEAR LOVE,—Since I heard from you, I sent you a little print, and two barrels of oysters, and I shall

(1) This seems to allude to some favour (probably a pecuniary one) which Johnson was to solicit from Sir Joshua for Miss Reynolds. — C.

have some little books to send you soon. I have seen Mr. Pearson, and am pleased to find that he has got a living. I was hurried when he was with me, but had time to hear that my friends were all well.

"Poor Mrs. Adey was, I think, a good woman, and therefore her death is less to be lamented; but it is not pleasant to think how uncertain it is, that, when friends part, they will ever meet again. My old complaint of flatulence, and tight and short breath, oppress me heavily. My nights are very restless. I think of consulting the doctor to-morrow.

"This has been a mild winter, for which I hope you have been the better. Take what care you can of yourself, and do not forget to drink. I was somehow or other hindered from coming into the country last summer, but I think of coming this year. I am, dear love, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON.'

LETTER 336. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, March 4. 1779.

"DEAR MADAM, — Mrs. Gastrell and you are very often in my thoughts, though I do not write so often as might be expected from so much love and so much respect. I please myself with thinking that I shall see you again, and shall find you better. But futurity is uncertain: poor David [Garrick] had doubtless many futurities in his head, which death has intercepted — a death, I believe, totally unexpected: he did not in his last hour seem to think his life in danger.

"My old complaints hang heavy on me, and my nights are very uncomfortable and unquiet; and sleepless nights make heavy days. I think to go to my physician, and try what can be done. For why should not I grow better as well as you?

"Now you are better, pray, dearest Madam, take care of yourself. I hope to come this summer and

watch you. It will be a very pleasant journey if I can find you and dear Mrs. Gastrell well. I sent you two barrels of oysters; if you would wish for more, please to send your commands to, Madam, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 357. TO MRS. THRALE.

"March 10. 1779.

"I will come to see you on Saturday, only let me know whether I must come to the Borough, or am to be taken up here.

"I got my Lives, not yet quite printed, put neatly together, and sent them to the king: what he says of them I know not. If the king is a Whig, he will not like them: but is any king a Whig?"

CHAPTER VIII.

1779.

Mr. Tasker's "Ode." — Man of the World. — "Vicar of Wakefield." — Junius's Letters. — Parental Authority. — London. — "Government of the Tongue." — Good Friday. — Easter Day. — Eel-skinning. — Claret, Port, Brandy. — Shakspeare's Witches. — Lochlomond. — Liberty. — Hackman. — Johnson and Topham Beauclerk. — Mallet. — Friendship. — Eulogy on Garrick. — "Art of getting drunk." — Empirics — Parental Affection. — Lord Marchmont. — Pope. — Parnell's "Hermit." — Correspondence.

On the 23d of February I had written to him again, complaining of his silence, as I had heard he was ill, and had written to Mr. Thrale for information concerning him: and I announced my intention of soon being again in London.

LETTER 338. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 13, 1779.

"DEAR SIR, — Why should you take such delight to make a bustle, to write to Mr. Thrale that I am negligent, and to Francis to do what is so very unnecessary? Thrale, you may be sure, cared not about it; and I shall spare Francis the trouble, by ordering a set both

of the Lives and Poets to dear Mrs. Boswell ([1]), in acknowledgment of her marmalade. Persuade her to accept them, and accept them kindly. If I thought she would receive them scornfully, I would send them to Miss Boswell, who, I hope, has yet none of her mamma's ill-will to me.

"I would send sets of Lives, four volumes, to some other friends, to Lord Hailes first. His second volume lies by my bed-side, a book surely of great labour, and to every just thinker of great delight. Write me word to whom I shall send besides. Would it please Lord Auchinleck? Mrs. Thrale waits in the coach. I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter crossed me on the road to London, where I arrived on Monday, March 15., and next morning, at a late hour, found Dr. Johnson sitting over his tea, attended by Mrs. Desmoulins, Mr. Levett, and a clergyman, who had come to submit some poetical pieces to his revision. It is wonderful what a number and variety of writers, some of them even unknown to him, prevailed on his good-nature to look over their works, and suggest corrections and improvements. My arrival interrupted, for a little while, the important business of this true representative of Bayes; upon its being resumed, I found that the subject under immediate consideration was a translation, yet in manuscript, of the "Carmen Seculare" of Horace, which had this year been set to music, and performed as a public entertainment in London, for the joint benefit of Monsieur Philidor ([2])

(1) He sent a set elegantly bound and gilt, which was received as a very handsome present.

(2) [Andrew Philidor, a musician and chess-player of eminence. In 1777, he published "Analyse du Jeu des Echecs."]

and Signor Baretti. When Johnson had done reading, the author asked him bluntly, "If upon the whole it was a good translation?" Johnson, whose regard for truth was uncommonly strict, seemed to be puzzled for a moment what answer to make, as he certainly could not honestly commend the performance: with exquisite address he evaded the question thus, "Sir, I do not say that it may not be made a very good translation." Here nothing whatever in favour of the performance was affirmed, and yet the writer was not shocked. A printed "Ode to the Warlike Genius of Britain" came next in review. The bard (1) was a lank bony figure, with short black hair; he was writhing himself in agitation, while Johnson read, and, showing his teeth in a grin of earnestness, exclaimed in broken sentences, and in a keen sharp tone, "Is that poetry, Sir? — Is it Pindar?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there is here a great deal of what is called poetry." Then, turning to me, the poet cried, "My muse has not been long upon the town, and (pointing to the Ode) it trembles under the hand of the great critic." Johnson, in a tone of displeasure, asked him, "Why do you praise Anson?" I did not trouble him by asking his reason for this question. (2)

(1) This was a Mr. Tasker. Mr. D'Israeli informs me that this portrait is so accurately drawn, that being, some years after the publication of this work, at a watering-place on the coast of Devon, he was visited by Mr. Tasker, whose name, however, he did not then know, but was so struck with his resemblance to Boswell's picture, that he asked him whether he had not had an interview with Dr. Johnson, and it appeared that he was indeed the author of "The Warlike Genius of Britain." — C.

(2) He disliked Lord Anson probably from local politics

He proceeded: — "Here is an error, Sir; you have made Genius feminine." "Palpable, Sir (cried the enthusiast); I know it. But (in a lower tone) it was to pay a compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, with which her grace was pleased. She is walking across Coxheath in the military uniform, and I suppose her to be the Genius of Britain." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are giving a reason for it; but that will not make it right. You may have a reason why two and two should make five; but they will still make but four."

Although I was several times with him in the course of the following days, such it seems were my occupations, or such my negligence, that I have preserved no memorial of his conversation till Friday, March 26., when I visited him. He said he expected to be attacked on account of his "Lives of the Poets." "However," said he, "I would rather be attacked than unnoticed. For the worst thing you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works. An assault upon a town is a bad thing; but starving it is still worse; an assault may be unsuccessful, you may have more men killed than you kill; but if you starve the town, you are sure of victory."

Talking of a friend [1] of ours associating with

On one occasion he visited Lord Anson's seat, and although, as he confessed, "well received and kindly treated, he, with the true gratitude of a wit, ridiculed the master of the house before he had left it an hour." In the grounds there is a Temple of the Winds, on which he made the following epigram:

Gratum animum laudo; Qui debuit omnia ventis,
Quam bene ventorum surgere templa jubet! — *Piozzi's Anecdotes.* — C.

(1) Probably Sir Joshua Reynolds. See *antè*, p. 96. — C.

persons of very discordant principles and characters; I said he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but one may be so much a man of the world, as to be nothing in the world. I remember a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge. 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.'" BOSWELL. "That was a fine passage." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir: there was another fine passage too, which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over; for I found that generally what was new was false.'" (1) I said I did not like to sit with people of whom I had not a good opinion. JOHNSON. "But you must not indulge your delicacy too much, or you will be a *tête-à-tête* man all your life.

LETTER 339. TO MRS. THRALE.

"March 18. 1779.

"On Monday I came late to Mrs. Vesey. Mrs Montagu was there; I called for the print (2), and got good words. The evening was not brilliant, but I had thanks for my company. The night was troublesome.

(1) Dr. Burney, in a note introduced in a former page, has mentioned this circumstance, concerning Goldsmith, as communicated to him by Dr. Johnson, not recollecting that it occurred here. His remark, however, is not wholly superfluous, as it ascertains that the words which Goldsmith had put into the mouth of a fictitious character in the "Vicar of Wakefield," and which, as we learn from Dr. Johnson, he afterwards expunged, related, like many other passages in his novel, to himself. — M.

(2) Mrs. Montagu's portrait. — C.

On Tuesday I fasted, and went to the doctor: he ordered bleeding. On Wednesday I had the tea-pot, fasted, and was blooded. Wednesday night was better. To-day I have dined at Mr. Strahan's, at Islington (1), with his new wife. To-night there will be opium; to-morrow the tea pot; then heigh for Saturday. I wish the doctor would bleed me again. Yet every body that I meet says that I look better than when I was last met."

During my stay in London this spring, I find I was unaccountably negligent in preserving Johnson's sayings, more so than at any time when I was happy enough to have an opportunity of hearing his wisdom and wit. There is no help for it now. I must content myself with presenting such scraps as I have. But I am nevertheless ashamed and vexed to think how much has been lost. It is not that there was a bad crop this year, but that I was not sufficiently careful in gathering it in. I therefore, in some instances, can only exhibit a few detached fragments.

Talking of the wonderful concealment of the author of the celebrated letters signed *Junius*, he said, "I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different, had I asked him if he was the author; a man so questioned, as to an anonymous publication, may think he has a right to deny it."

He observed that his old friend, Mr. Sheridan, had been honoured with extraordinary attention in

(1) [In Upper Street, nearly opposite the church. The house has undergone no exterior alteration.]

his own country, by having had an exception made in his favour in an Irish act of parliament concerning insolvent debtors. (1) "Thus to be singled out," said he, "by a legislature, as an object of public consideration and kindness, is a proof of no common merit."

At Streatham, on Monday, March 29., at breakfast, he maintained that a father had no right to control the inclinations of his daughter in marriage.

On Wednesday, March 31., when I visited him, and confessed an excess of which I had very seldom been guilty — that I had spent a whole night in playing at cards, and that I could not look back on it with satisfaction — instead of a harsh animadversion, he mildly said, "Alas, Sir, on how few things can we look back with satisfaction!"

On Thursday, April 1., he commended one of the Dukes of Devonshire for "a dogged veracity." (2) He said, too, "London is nothing to some people; but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place. And there is no place where economy can be so well practised as in London: more can be had here for the money, even by ladies,

(1) This is a total mistake. Mr. Whyte tells us (*Miscell. Nova.*) of the personal civility with which some members of a committee of the Irish House of Commons on a bill for the relief of insolvent debtors treated Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Whyte, who appeared on his behalf, but there is no exception in the act. Sheridan's name is one of some hundreds, and has no distinction whatsoever. The favour he sought was, to be *included* in the act without being in actual custody, as he was resident in France; this he obtained, but not specially, for one hundred and twenty other persons in similar circumstances are also included. See *Schedule to Irish Statute*, 5 G. 3. c. [illegible] — C.

(2) See *ante*, p. 3.

than any where else. You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place; you must make an uniform appearance. Here a lady may have well-furnished apartments, and elegant dress, without any meat in her kitchen."

I was amused by considering with how much ease and coolness he could write or talk to a friend, exhorting him not to suppose that happiness was not to be found as well in other places as in London; when he himself was at all times sensible of its being, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. The truth is, that by those who from sagacity, attention, and experience, have learnt the full advantage of London, its pre-eminence over every other place, not only for variety of enjoyment, but for comfort, will be felt with a philosophical exultation. The freedom from remark and petty censure, with which life may be passed there, is a circumstance which a man who knows the teasing restraint of a narrow circle must relish highly. Mr. Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestic habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly, in my hearing, "Though I have the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there; I should be obliged to be so much *upon my good behaviour*." In London, a man may live in splendid society at one time, and in frugal retirement at another, without animadversion. There, and there alone, a man's own house is truly his *castle*, in which he can be in perfect safety from intrusion whenever he pleases. I never shall forget how well this was expressed to me one day by Mr.

Meynell: "The chief advantage of London," said he, "is, that a man is always *so near his burrow.*"

He said of one of his old acquaintances (1), "He is very fit for a travelling governor. He knows French very well. He is a man of good principles; and there would be no danger that a young gentleman should catch his manner; for it is so very bad, that it must be avoided. In that respect he would be like the drunken Helot."

A gentleman has informed me, that Johnson said of the same person, "Sir, he has the most *inverted* understanding of any man whom I have ever known."

On Friday, April 2., being Good Friday, I visited him in the morning as usual; and finding that we insensibly fell into a train of ridicule upon the foibles of one of our friends, a very worthy man, I, by way of a check, quoted some good admonition from "The Government of the Tongue," that very pious book. It happened also remarkably enough, that the subject of the sermon preached to us to-day by Dr. Burrows, the rector of St. Clement Danes, was the certainty that at the last day we must give an account of "the deeds done in the body;" and amongst various acts of culpability he mentioned evil-speaking. As we were moving slowly along in the crowd from church, Johnson jogged my elbow, and said, "Did you attend to the sermon?" "Yes, Sir," said I; "it was very applicable to *us*." He,

(1) Probably Mr. Elphinstone, the schoolmaster at Kensington, and translator of Martial.—C.

however, stood upon the defensive. "Why, Sir, the sense of ridicule is given us, and may be lawfully used. The author of 'The Government of the Tongue' would have us treat all men alike."

In the interval between morning and evening service, he endeavoured to employ himself earnestly in devotional exercise; and, as he has mentioned in his "Prayers and Meditations," gave me "*Les Pensées de Paschal*," that I might not interrupt him. I preserve the book with reverence. His presenting it to me is marked upon it with his own hand, and I have found in it a truly divine unction. We went to church again in the afternoon.

On Saturday, April 3., I visited him at night, and found him sitting in Mrs. Williams's room, with her, and one who he afterwards told me was a natural son [1] of the second Lord Southwell. The table had a singular appearance, being covered with a heterogeneous assemblage of oysters and porter for his company, and tea for himself. I mentioned my having heard an eminent physician, who was himself a Christian, argue in favour of universal toleration, and maintain, that no man could be hurt by another man's differing from him in opinion. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to a certain degree hurt by knowing that even one man does not believe."

"April 2.—Good Friday.—I am now to review [2]

(1) Mauritius Lowe, a painter, in whose favour Johnson, some years afterwards, wrote a kind letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds.— M.

(2) Dr. Johnson's annual review of his conduct appears to have been this year more detailed and severe than usual.— C.

the last year, and find little but dismal vacuity, neither business nor pleasure; much intended, and little done. My health is much broken; my nights afford me little rest. I have tried opium, but its help is counterbalanced with great disturbance; it prevents the spasms, but it hinders sleep. O God, have mercy on me!

"Last week I published (the first part of) the Lives of the Poets, written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety.

"In this last year I have made little acquisition; I have scarcely read any thing. I maintain Mrs. —— (1) and her daughter. Other good of myself I know not where to find, except a little charity. But I am now in my seventieth year; what can be done ought not to be delayed.

"April 3. 1779, 11 P.M. — Easter-eve. — This is the time of my annual review, and annual resolution. The review is comfortless; little done. Part of the Life of Dryden and the Life of Milton have been written; but my mind has neither been improved nor enlarged. I have read little, almost nothing. And I am not conscious that I have gained any good, or quitted any evil habits.

"April 4. 1779, Easter-day. — I rose about half an hour after nine, transcribed the prayer written last night; and by neglecting to count time sat too long at breakfast, so that I came to church at the first lesson. I attended the Litany pretty well; but in the pew could not hear the communion service, and missed the prayer for the church militant. Before I went to the altar, I prayed the occasional prayer. At the altar I commended my Θ Φ (2), and again prayed the prayer; I then prayed

(1) No doubt Mrs. Desmoulins and her daughter. — C.

(2) These letters (which Dr. Strahan seems not to have understood, p. 192.) probably mean [illegible], "*departed friends.*"

the collects, and again my own prayer by memory. I left out a clause. I then received, I hope with earnestness; and while others received, sat down; but thinking that posture, though usual, improper, I rose and stood. I prayed again, in the pew, but with what prayer I have forgotten. When I used the occasional prayer at the altar, I added a general purpose,—To avoid idleness. I gave two shillings to the plate.

"Before I went I used, I think, my prayer, and endeavoured to calm my mind. After my return I used it again, and the collect for the day. Lord have mercy upon me! I have for some nights called Francis to prayers, and last night discoursed with him on the sacrament." (Pr. & Med. p. 171—175.)

On Easter-day, after solemn service at St. Paul's, I dined with him. Mr. Allen, the printer, was also his guest. He was uncommonly silent; and I have not written down any thing, except a single curious fact, which, having the sanction of his inflexible veracity, may be received as a striking instance of human insensibility and inconsideration. As he was passing by a fishmonger who was skinning an eel alive, he heard him "curse it, because it would not lie still."

On Wednesday, April 7., I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. I have not marked what company was there. Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors; and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, that "a man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk." He

—C.—Some critics have objected to [illegible] in this sense: but it is so used in Euripides. See Supp. v. 275.—C. 1835.

was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge, not from recollection, which might be dim, but from immediate sensation. He shook his head, and said, "Poor stuff! No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking *can* do for him. There are, indeed, few who are able to drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained. And yet," proceeded he, "as in all pleasure hope is a considerable part, I know not but fruition comes too quick by brandy. Florence wine I think the worst; it is wine only to the eye; it is wine neither while you are drinking it, nor after you have drunk it; it neither pleases the taste, nor exhilarates the spirits." I reminded him how heartily he and I used to drink wine together, when we were first acquainted; and how I used to have a head-ache after sitting up with him. He did not like to have this recalled; or, perhaps, thinking that I boasted improperly, resolved to have a witty stroke at me: "Nay, Sir, it was not the *wine* that made your head ache, but the *sense* that I put into it." BOSWELL. "What, Sir! will sense make the head ache?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir (with a smile), when it is not used to it." No man who has a true relish of pleasantry could be offended at this; especially if Johnson in a long intimacy had given him repeated proofs of his regard and good estimation. I used to say that as he had given me a thousand

pounds in praise, he had a good right now and then to take a guinea from me.

On Thursday, April 8., I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's, with Lord Graham (1), and some other company. We talked of Shakspeare's witches. JOHNSON. "They are beings of his own creation; they are a compound of malignity and meanness, without any abilities; and are quite different from the Italian magician. King James says in his 'Dæmonology,' 'Magicians command the devils; witches are their servants.' The Italian magicians are elegant beings." RAMSAY. "Opera witches, not Drury Lane witches." Johnson observed, that abilities might be employed in a narrow sphere, as in getting money, which he said he believed no man could do without vigorous parts, though concentrated to a point. RAMSAY. "Yes, like a strong horse in a mill; he pulls better."

Lord Graham, while he praised the beauty of Lochlomond, on the banks of which is his family seat, complained of the climate, and said he could not bear it. JOHNSON. "Nay, my lord, don't talk so: you may bear it well enough. Your ancestors have borne it more years than I can tell." This was a handsome compliment to the antiquity of the house of Montrose. His lordship told me afterwards that he had only affected to complain of the climate, lest, if he had spoken as favourably of his country as he really thought, Dr. Johnson might have attacked it. Johnson was very courteous to

(1) The present (third) Duke of Montrose, born in 1755. He succeeded to the dukedom in 1790. — C.

Lady Margaret Macdonald. "Madam," said he, "when I was in the Isle of Skye ([1]), I heard of the people running to take the stones off the road lest Lady Margaret's horse should stumble."

Lord Graham commended Dr. Drummond at Naples as a man of extraordinary talents; and added, that he had a great love of liberty. JOHNSON. "He is *young* ([2]), my lord (looking to his lordship with an arch smile); all *boys* love liberty, till experience convinces them they are not so fit to govern themselves as they imagined. We are all agreed as to our own liberty; we would have as much of it as we can get; but we are not agreed as to the liberty of others: for in proportion as we take, others must loose. I believe we hardly wish that the mob should have liberty to govern us. When that was the case sometime ago, no man was at liberty not to have candles in his windows." RAMSAY. "The result is, that order is better than confusion." JOHNSON. "The result is, that order cannot be had but by subordination."

On Friday, April 16., I had been present at the trial of the unfortunate Mr. Hackman, who, in a fit of frantic jealous love, had shot Miss Ray, the favourite of a nobleman.([3]) Johnson, in whose company I dined to-day with some other friends, was much interested by my account of what passed, and particularly with his prayer for the mercy of Hea-

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 289. — C.

(2) His lordship was twenty-four. — C.

(3) John, sixth Earl of Sandwich. — C.

ven. He said, in a solemn fervid tone, "I hope he *shall* find mercy."

This day a violent altercation arose between Johnson and Beauclerk, which having made much noise at the time, I think it proper, in order to prevent any future misrepresentation, to give a minute account of it.

In talking of Hackman, Johnson argued, as Judge Blackstone had done, that his being furnished with two pistols was a proof that he meant to shoot two persons. Mr. Beauclerk said, "No; for that every wise man who intended to shoot himself took two pistols, that he might be sure of doing it at once. Lord ———'s cook shot himself with one pistol, and lived ten days in great agony. Mr. ——— (1), who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself; and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion; *he* had two charged pistols; one was found lying charged upon the table by him, after he had shot himself with the other."— "Well," said Johnson, with an air of triumph, "you see here one pistol

(1) Some thought that Mr. Damer (whose suicide is recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1776, p. 383.) was here meant; but I have since learned that it was Johnson's old friend, Mr. Fitzherbert, who terminated his own life, January 2. 1772 (see *antè*, Vol. III. p. 270.). This correction is so far important, that perhaps Mr. Beauclerk's levity in mentioning an event which was probably very painful to Johnson, may have disposed him to the subsequent, and, in such case, pardonable asperity. — C. 1835.

was sufficient." Beauclerk replied smartly, "Because it happened to kill him." And either then or a very little afterwards, being piqued at Johnson's triumphant remark, added, "This is what you don't know, and I do." There was then a cessation of the dispute; and some minutes intervened, during which, dinner and the glass went on cheerfully; when Johnson suddenly and abruptly exclaimed, "Mr. Beauclerk, how came you to talk so petulantly to me, as 'This is what you don't know, but what I know?' One thing *I* know which *you* don't seem to know, that you are very uncivil." BEAUCLERK. "Because *you* began by being uncivil (which you always are)." The words in parentheses were, I believe, not heard by Dr. Johnson. Here again there was a cessation of arms. Johnson told me, that the reason why he waited at first some time without taking any notice of what Mr. Beauclerk said, was because he was thinking whether he should resent it. But when he considered that there were present a young lord and an eminent traveller, two men of the world, with whom he had never dined before, he was apprehensive that they might think they had a right to take such liberties with him as Beauclerk did, and therefore resolved he would not let it pass; adding, "that he would not appear a coward." A little while after this, the conversation turned on the violence of Hackman's temper. Johnson then said, "It was his business to *command* his temper, as my friend, Mr. Beauclerk, should have done some time ago."

UCLERK. "I should learn of *you*, Sir." JOHN- "Sir, you have given *me* opportunities enough of learning, when I have been in *your* company. No man loves to be treated with contempt." BEAUCLERK (with a polite inclination towards Johnson). "Sir, you have known me twenty years, and however may have treated others, you may be sure I could never treat you with contempt." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have said more than was necessary." Thus it ended; and Beauclerk's coach not having come for him till very late, Dr. Johnson and another gentleman sat with him a long time after the rest of the company were gone; and he and I dined at Beauclerk's on the Saturday se'nnight following.

After this tempest had subsided, I recollect the following particulars of his conversation:

"I am always for getting a boy forward in his learning; for that is a sure good. I would let him at first read *any* English book which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal, when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards."

"Mallet, I believe, never wrote a single line of his projected life of the Duke of Marlborough. He groped for materials, and thought of it, till he had exhausted his mind. Thus it sometimes happens that men entangle themselves in their own schemes."

"To be contradicted in order to force you to talk is mighty unpleasing. You *shine*, indeed; but it is by being *ground*."

Of a gentleman who made some figure among the

literati of his time (Mr. Fitzherbert) [1], he said, "What eminence he had was by a felicity of manner: he had no more learning than what he could not help."

On Saturday, April 24., I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Jones (afterwards Sir William), Mr. Langton, Mr. Steevens, Mr. Paradise and Dr. Higgins. I mentioned that Mr. Wilkes had attacked Garrick to me, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. "I believe he is right, Sir. Οι φιλοι, ου φιλος — He had friends, but no friend. [2] Garrick was so diffused, he had no man to whom he wished to unbosom himself. He found people always ready to applaud him, and that always for the same thing: so he saw life with great uniformity." I took upon me, for once, to fight with Goliah's weapons, and play the sophist.— "Garrick did not need a friend, as he got from every body all he wanted. What is a friend? One who supports you, and comforts you, while others do not. Friendship, you know, Sir, is the cordial drop, 'to make the nauseous draught of life go down:' but if the draught be not nauseous, if it be all sweet, there is no occasion for that drop." JOHNSON. "Many men would not be content to live so. I hope I should not. They would wish to have an intimate friend, with whom they might compare minds, and cherish private virtues." One of the company mentioned Lord Chesterfield, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. "There were

(1) See antè, Vol. VI. p. 288. — C.
(2) See p. 132. of this vol., and Vol. I. p. 240.

more materials to make friendship in Garrick, had he not been so diffused." BOSWELL. "Garrick was pure gold, but beat out to thin leaf. Lord Chesterfield was tinsel."(1) JOHNSON. "Garrick was a very good man, the cheerfullest man of his age; a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness; and a man who gave away freely money acquired by himself. He began the world with a great hunger for money; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence-halfpenny do. But when he had got money, he was very liberal." I presumed to animadvert on his eulogy on Garrick, in his "Lives of the Poets." "You say, Sir, his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations." JOHNSON. "I could not have said more nor less. It is the truth; *eclipsed*, not *extinguished*; and his death *did* eclipse; it was like a storm." BOSWELL. "But why nations? Did his gaiety extend further than his own nation?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, nations may be said, if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, and to have gaiety — which they have not. *You* are an exception, though. Come, gentlemen, let us candidly admit that there is one Scotchman who is cheerful." BEAUCLERK. "But he is a very unnatural Scotchman." I, however, continued to

(1) Boswell did not here mean (as it has been sometimes misunderstood) to call Lord Chesterfield's talents and acquirements *tinsel*; the allusion was to the pretence — the tinsel profession — of *friendship*, with which Johnson reproached Lord Chesterfield, and which Boswell, to please the Doctor, thus repeats. — C.

think the compliment to Garrick hyperbolically untrue. His acting had ceased some time before his death; at any rate, he had acted in Ireland but a short time, at an early period of his life, and never in Scotland. I objected, also, to what appears an anti-climax of praise, when contrasted with the preceding panegyric —"and diminished the public stock of harmless pleasure!" Is not *harmless pleasure* very tame?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise. Pleasure is a word of dubious import; pleasure is in general dangerous, and pernicious to virtue; to be able therefore to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess." This was, perhaps, as ingenious a defence as could be made; still, however, I was not satisfied.

A celebrated wit(1) being mentioned, he said, "One may say of him as was said of a French wit, *Il n'a de l'esprit que contre Dieu.* I have been several times in company with him, but never perceived any strong power of wit. He produces a general effect by various means; he has a cheerful countenance and a gay voice. Besides, his trade is wit. It would be as wild in him to come into company without merriment, as for a highwayman to take the road without his pistols."

Talking of the effects of drinking, he said,

(1) It has been suggested that Mr. George Selwyn is here meant; but I cannot trace any acquaintance between Selwyn and Johnson; nor does the picture of this wit, drawn by Johnson, resemble Mr. Selwyn. I believe Horace Walpole was meant. — C.

"Drinking may be practised with great prudence; a man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated has not the art of getting drunk; a sober man who happens occasionally to get drunk, readily enough goes into a new company, which a man who has been drinking should never do. Such a man will undertake any thing; he is without skill in inebriation. I used to slink home when I had drunk too much. A man accustomed to self-examination will be conscious when he is drunk, though an habitual drunkard will not be conscious of it. I knew a physician (1), who for twenty years was not sober; yet in a pamphlet, which he wrote upon fevers, he appealed to Garrick and me for his vindication from a charge of drunkenness. A bookseller (2), (naming him) who got a large fortune by trade, was so habitually and equably drunk, that his most intimate friends never perceived that he was more sober at one time than another."

Talking of celebrated and successful irregular practisers in physic, he said, "Taylor (3) was the most ignorant man I ever knew, but sprightly; Ward (4), the dullest. Taylor challenged me once to talk Latin with him," laughing. "I quoted some

(1) [Dr. James, the inventor of the celebrated fever powders.]

(2) This was Andrew Miller, of whom, when talking one day of the patronage the great sometimes affect to give to literature and literary men, Johnson said, "Andrew Miller is the *Mæcenas* of the age." — *Hawk. Apoph.* p. 200. — C.

(3) The Chevalier Taylor, the celebrated oculist. — M.

(4) [Dr. Joshua Ward, the celebrated quack, first began to practise physic about the year 1733, and combated, for some time, the united efforts of wit, learning, argument, and ridicule. He died in 1761.]

of Horace, which he took to be a part of my own speech. He said a few words well enough." BEAUCLERK. "I remember, Sir, you said, that Taylor was an instance how far impudence could carry ignorance." Mr. Beauclerk was very entertaining this day, and told us a number of short stories in a lively elegant manner, and with that air of *the world* which has I know not what impressive effect, as if there were something more than is expressed, or than perhaps we could perfectly understand. As Johnson and I accompanied Sir Joshua Reynolds in his coach, Johnson said, "There is in Beauclerk a predominance over his company, that one does not like. But he is a man who has lived so much in the world, that he has a short story on every occasion: he is always ready to talk, and is never exhausted."

Johnson and I passed the evening at Miss Reynolds's, Sir Joshua's sister. I mentioned that an eminent friend (1) of ours, talking of the common remark, that affection descends, said, that "this was wisely (2) contrived for the preservation of mankind; for which it was not so necessary that there should be affection from children to parents, as from parents to children; nay, there would be no harm in that view, though children should at a certain age eat their parents." JOHNSON. "But, Sir, if this were known generally to be the case, parents

(1) Probably Mr. Burke. — C.

(2) Wisely and mercifully; *wisely* to ensure the preservation and education of children, and *mercifully* to render less afflictive the loss of parents, which, in the course of nature, children must suffer. — C.

would not have affection for children." BOSWELL. "True, Sir; for it is in expectation of a return that parents are so attentive to their children; and I know a very pretty instance of a little girl of whom her father was very fond, who once, when he was in a melancholy fit, and had gone to bed, persuaded him to rise in good humour by saying, 'My dear papa, please to get up, and let me help you on with your clothes, that I may learn to do it when you are an old man.'" (1)

Soon after this time a little incident occurred, which I will not suppress, because I am desirous that my work should be, as much as is consistent with the strictest truth, an antidote to the false and injurious notions of his character, which have been given by others, and therefore I infuse every drop of genuine sweetness into my biographical cup.

LETTER 340. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"South Audley Street (2), Monday, April 26.

"MY DEAR SIR, — I am in great pain with an inflamed foot, and obliged to keep my bed, so am prevented from having the pleasure to dine at Mr. Ramsay's to-day, which is very hard; and my spirits are sadly sunk. Will you be so friendly as to come and sit an hour with me in the evening? I am ever yours, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 341. TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Harley Street.

"MR. JOHNSON laments the absence of Mr. Boswell, and will come to him."

(1) Mr. Boswell himself. — C.

(2) The residence of General Paoli. — C.

He came to me in the evening, and brought Sir Joshua Reynolds. I need scarcely say, that their conversation, while they sat by my bedside, was the most pleasing opiate to pain that could have been administered.

Johnson being now better disposed to obtain information concerning Pope than he was last year(1), sent by me to my Lord Marchmont a present of those volumes of his "Lives of the Poets" which were at this time published, with a request to have permission to wait on him; and his lordship, who had called on him twice, obligingly appointed Saturday, the 1st of May, for receiving us.

On that morning Johnson came to me from Streatham, and after drinking chocolate at General Paoli's in South Audley Street, we proceeded to Lord Marchmont's in Curzon Street. His lordship met us at the door of his library, and with great politeness said to Johnson, "I am not going to make an encomium upon *myself*, by telling you the high respect I have for *you*, Sir." Johnson was exceedingly courteous; and the interview, which lasted about two hours, during which the earl communicated his anecdotes of Pope, was as agreeable as I could have wished. (2) When we came out, I said to Johnson, "that, considering his lordship's civility, I should have been vexed if he had again

(1) See *antè*, p. 204. — C.

(2) His first question, as he told Sir J. Hawkins, was, "What kind of a man was Mr. Pope in his conversation?" His lordship answered, "That if the conversation did not take something of a lively or epigrammatic turn, he fell asleep, or, perhaps, pretended to be so." — C.

failed to come." "Sir," said he, "I would rather have given twenty pounds than not have come." I accompanied him to Streatham, where we dined, and returned to town in the evening.

On Monday, May 3., I dined with him at Mr. Dilly's. I pressed him this day for his opinion on the passage in Parnell, concerning which I had in vain questioned him in several letters, and at length obtained it in *due form of law*.

"CASE FOR DR. JOHNSON'S OPINION;

"May 3. 1779.

"Parnell, in his 'Hermit,' has the following passage: —

'To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* and *swains* report it right
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).'

Is there not a contradiction in its being *first* supposed that the Hermit knew *both* what books and swains reported of the world; yet *afterwards* said, that he knew it by swains *alone*?"

"I think it an inaccuracy. He mentions two instructors in the first line, and says he had only one in the next." (1)

This evening I set out for Scotland.

(1) "I do not," says Mr. Malone, "see any difficulty in this passage, and wonder that Dr. Johnson should have acknowledged it to be *inaccurate*. The Hermit, it should be observed, had no actual experience of the world whatsoever: all his knowledge concerning it had been obtained in two ways; from *books*, and from the *relations* of those country swains who had seen a little

Letter 342. TO MRS. ASTON.

"May 4. 1779.

"Dear Madam,—When I sent you the little books, I was not sure that you were well enough to take the trouble of reading them, but have lately heard from Mr. Greeves that you are much recovered. I hope you will gain more and more strength, and live many and many years, and I shall come again to Stowhill, and live as I used to do, with you and dear Mrs. Gastrel.

"I am not well: my nights are very troublesome, and my breath is short; but I know not that it grows much worse. I wish to see you. Mrs. Harvey has just sent to me to dine with her, and I have promised to wait on her to-morrow.

"Mr. Green comes home loaded with curiosities (1),

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of it. The plain meaning, therefore, is, 'To clear his doubts concerning Providence, and to obtain some knowledge of the world by actual experience; to see whether the accounts furnished by books, or by the oral communications of swains, were just representations of it;' [I say *swains*,] for his oral or *vivâ voce* information had been obtained from that part of mankind *alone*, &c. The word *alone* here does not relate to the whole of the preceding line, as has been supposed, but, by a common licence, to the words, *of all mankind*, which are understood, and of which it is restrictive." Mr. Malone, it must be owned, has shown much critical ingenuity in his explanation of this passage. His interpretation, however, seems to me much too recondite. The *meaning* of the passage may be certain enough; but surely the expression is confused, and one part of it contradictory to the other. — B. — It is odd enough that these critics did not think it worth their while to consult the original for the exact words on which they were exercising their ingenuity. Parnell's words are *not* "*if books* AND *swains*," but "*if books* OR *swains*," which *might* mean, not that books and swains *agreed*, but that they *differed*, and that the Hermit's doubt was excited by the difference between his authorities. This, however, would make no great alteration in the question, on which Dr. Johnson's decision seems just. — C.

(1) Mr. Green, it will be recollected, had a *museum* at Lichfield. — C.

and will be able to give his friends new entertainment. When I come, it will be great entertainment to me if I can find you and Mrs. Gastrel well, and willing to receive me. I am, dearest Madam, &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 343. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"May 4. 1779.

"Dear Madam, — Mr. Green has informed me that you are much better; I hope I need not tell you that I am glad of it. I cannot boast of being much better; my old nocturnal complaint still pursues me, and my respiration is difficult, though much easier than when I left you the summer before last. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale are well; miss has been a little indisposed, but she is got well again. They have, since the loss of their boy, had two daughters; but they seem likely to want a son.

"I hope you had some books which I sent you. I was sorry for poor Mrs. Adey's death, and am afraid you will be sometimes solitary; but endeavour, whether alone or in company, to keep yourself cheerful. My friends likewise die very fast; but such is the state of man. I am, dear Love, your &c. Sam. Johnson."

He had, before I left London, resumed the conversation concerning the appearance of a ghost at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which Mr. John Wesley believed, but to which Johnson did not give credit. I was, however, desirous to examine the question closely, and at the same time wished to be made acquainted with Mr. John Wesley; for though I differed from him in some points, I admired his various talents, and loved his pious zeal. At my request, therefore, Dr. Johnson gave me a letter of introduction to him.

LETTER 344. TO THE REV. MR. JOHN WESLEY.

"May 5. 1774.

"SIR,—Mr. Boswell, a gentleman who has been long known to me, is desirous of being known to you, and has asked this recommendation, which I give him with great willingness, because I think it very much to be wished that worthy and religious men should be acquainted with each other. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Wesley being in the course of his ministry at Edinburgh, I presented this letter to him, and was very politely received. I begged to have it returned to me, which was accordingly done. His state of the evidence as to the ghost did not satisfy me.

LETTER 345. TO MRS. THRALE. (1)

"Lichfield, May 29. 1779.

"I have now been here a week, and will try to give you my journal, or such parts of it as are fit, in my mind, for communication.

"On Friday, We set out about twelve, and lay at Daventry.

"On Saturday, We dined with Rann at Coventry. He intercepted us at the town's end. I saw Tom Johnson, who had hardly life to know that I was with him. I hear he is since dead. In the evening I came to Lucy, and walked to Stowhill. Mrs. Aston was gone, or going to bed. I did not see her.

"Sunday.—After dinner I went to Stowhill, and was very kindly received. At night I saw my old friend

(1) Dr. Johnson made this year his usual excursion into the midland counties; but his visit was shortened by the alarming illness of Mrs. Thrale.—C.

Brodhurst — you know him — the playfellow of my infancy, and gave him a guinea.

"Monday. — Dr. Taylor came, and we went with Mrs. Cobb to Greenhill Bower. I had not seen it, perhaps, for fifty years. It is much degenerated. Every thing grows old. Taylor is to fetch me next Saturday. Mr. Green came to see us, and I ordered some physic.

"Tuesday. — Physic, and a little company. I dined, I think, with Lucy both Monday and Tuesday.

"Wednesday, Thursday. — I had a few visits, from Peter Garrick among the rest, and dined at Stowhill. My breath very short.

"Friday. — I dined at Stowhill. I have taken physic four days together.

"Saturday. — Mrs. Aston took me out in her chaise, and was very kind. I dined with Mrs. Cobb, and came to Lucy, with whom I found, as I had done the first day, Lady Smith and Miss Vyse."

Letter 346. TO THE SAME.

"Ashbourne, June 14. 1779.

"Your account of Mr. Thrale's illness (1) is very terrible; but when I remember that he seems to have it peculiar to his constitution — that whatever distemper he has, he always has his head affected — I am less frighted. The seizure was, I think, not apoplectical, but hysterical, and therefore not dangerous to life. I would have you, however, consult such physicians as you think you can best trust. Bromfield seems to have done well, and, by his practice, seems not to suspect an apoplexy. That is a solid and fundamental comfort. I remember Dr. Marsigli, an Italian physician, whose

(1) A serious apoplectic attack, which was the precursor of another of the same nature, which terminated his existence in the course of the ensuing year. — C.

seizure was more violent than Mr. Thrale's, for he fell down helpless; but his case was not considered as of much danger, and he went safe home, and is now a professor at Padua. His fit was considered as only hysterical."

LETTER 347. TO THE SAME.

"Ashbourne, June 17. 1779.

"It is certain that your first letter did not alarm me in proportion to the danger, for indeed it did not describe the danger as it was. I am glad that you have Heberden; and hope his restoratives and his preservatives will both be effectual. In the preservatives, dear Mr. Thrale must concur; yet what can he reform? or what can he add to his regularity and temperance? He can only sleep less. We will do, however, all we can. I go to Lichfield to-morrow, with intent to hasten to Streatham.

"Both Mrs. Aston and Dr. Taylor have had strokes of the palsy. The lady was sixty-eight, and at that age has gained ground upon it; the doctor is, you know, not young, and he is quite well, only suspicious of every sensation in the peccant arm. I hope my dear master's case is yet slighter, and that, as his age is less, his recovery will be more perfect. Let him keep his thoughts diverted and his mind easy."

LETTER 348. TO HENRY THRALE, ESQ.

"Lichfield, June 23. 1779.

"DEAR SIR,—To show you how well I think of your health, I have sent you an hundred pounds to keep for me. It will come within one day of quarter-day, and that day you must give me. I came by it in a very uncommon manner, and would not confound it with the rest.

"My wicked mistress talks as if she thought it possible for me to be indifferent or negligent about your health or hers. If I could have done any good, I had not delayed an hour to come to you, and I will come very soon to try if my advice can be of any use, or my company of any entertainment.

"What can be done, you must do for yourself. Do not let any uneasy thought settle in your mind. Cheerfulness and exercise are your great remedies. Nothing is for the present worth your anxiety. *Vivere læti* is one of the great rules of health. I believe it will be good to ride often, but never to weariness; for weariness is itself a temporary resolution of the nerves, and is therefore to be avoided. Labour is exercise continued to fatigue; exercise is labour used only while it produces pleasure.

"Above all, keep your mind quiet. Do not think with earnestness even of your health, but think on such things as may please without too much agitation; among which, I hope, is, dear Sir, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 349. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"June 27. 1779.

"DEAR MADAM, — I have sent what I can for your German friend. (1) At this time it is very difficult to get any money, and I cannot give much. I am, Madam, your most affectionate and most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

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(1) It is due to the memory of Dr. Johnson's inexhaustible charity to insert this otherwise insignificant note. When he says that he cannot give *much*, let it be recollected, that his only fixed income was his pension of 300*l*. a year, and that he had four or five eleemosynary inmates in his house. — C.

CHAPTER IX.

1779.

Experiments on the Constancy of Friends. — Colonel James Stuart.—Choice of Guardians.—Adventurers to the East Indies. — Poor of London. — Pope's "Essay on Man." — Lord Bolingbroke. — Johnson's Residences in London. — Conjugal Infidelity. — Roman Catholics. — Helps to the Study of Greek. — Middlesex Election. — House of Commons. — Right of Expulsion. — George Whitfield. — Philip Astley. — Keeping Company with Infidels. — Irish Union. — Vulgar Prosperity. — "The Ambassador says well." — Correspondence.

I did not write to Johnson, as usual, upon my return to my family; but tried how he would be affected by my silence. Mr. Dilly sent me a copy of a note which he received from him on the 13th of July, in these words: —

Letter 350. TO MR. DILLY.

"Sir,—Since Mr. Boswell's departure, I have never heard from him. Please to send word what you know of him, and whether you have sent my books to his lady. I am, &c. Sam. Johnson."

My readers will not doubt that his solicitude about me was very flattering.

LETTER 351. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"July 13. 1779.

"DEAR SIR, — What can possibly have happened, that keeps us two such strangers to each other? I expected to have heard from you when you came home; I expected afterwards. I went into the country and returned; and yet there is no letter from Mr. Boswell. No ill, I hope, has happened; and if ill should happen, why should it be concealed from him who loves you? Is it a fit of humour, that has disposed you to try who can hold out longest without writing? If it be, you have the victory. But I am afraid of something bad; set me free from my suspicions.

"My thoughts are at present employed in guessing the reason of your silence: you must not expect that I should tell you any thing, if I had any thing to tell. Write, pray write to me, and let me know what is or what has been the cause of this long interruption. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 352. TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, July 17. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR, — What may be justly denominated a supine indolence of mind has been my state of existence since I last returned to Scotland. In a livelier state I had often suffered severely from long intervals of silence on your part; and I had even been chid by you for expressing my uneasiness. I was willing to take advantage of my insensibility, and while I could bear the experiment, to try whether your affection for me would, after an unusual silence on my part, make you write first. This afternoon I have had a very high satisfaction by receiving your kind letter of inquiry, for which I most gratefully thank you. I am doubtful if

it was right to make the experiment; though I have gained by it. I was beginning to grow tender, and to upbraid myself, especially after having dreamt two nights ago that I was with you. I, and my wife, and my four children, are all well. I would not delay one post to answer your letter; but as it is late, I have not time to do more. You shall soon hear from me, upon many and various particulars; and I shall never again put you to any test. I am, with veneration, my dear Sir, your, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 22d of July, I wrote to him again; and gave him an account of my last interview with my worthy friend, Mr. Edward Dilly, at his brother's house at Southill in Bedfordshire, where he died soon after I parted from him, leaving me a very kind remembrance of his regard.

I informed him that Lord Hailes, who had promised to furnish him with some anecdotes for his "Lives of the Poets," had sent me three instances of Prior's borrowing from *Gombauld*, in *Recueil des Poëtes*, tome 3. Epigram "To John I owed great obligation," p. 25. "To the Duke of Noailles," p. 32. "Sauntering Jack and idle Joan," p. 35.

My letter was a pretty long one, and contained a variety of particulars; but he, it should seem, had not attended to it; for his next to me was as follows: —

LETTER 353. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Streatham, Sept. 9. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR, — Are you playing the same trick again, and trying who can keep silence longest. Re-

member that all tricks are either knavish or childish; and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend, as upon the chastity of a wife.

"What can be the cause of this second fit of silence, I cannot conjecture; but after one trick, I will not be cheated by another, nor will harass my thoughts with conjectures about the motives of a man who, probably, acts only by caprice. I therefore suppose you are well, and that Mrs. Boswell is well too, and that the fine summer has restored Lord Auchinleck. I am much better than you left me; I think I am better than when I was in Scotland.

"I forgot whether I informed you that poor Thrale has been in great danger. Mrs. Thrale likewise has miscarried, and been much indisposed. Every body else is well. Langton is in camp. I intend to put Lord Hailes's description of Dryden (1) into another edition, and, as I know his accuracy, wish he would consider the dates, which I could not always settle to my own mind.

"Mr. Thrale goes to Brighthelmstone, about Michaelmas, to be jolly and ride a-hunting. I shall go to town, or perhaps to Oxford. Exercise and gaiety, or rather carelessness, will, I hope, dissipate all remains of his malady; and I likewise hope, by the change of place, to find some opportunities of growing yet better myself I am, dear Sir, your, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

My readers will not be displeased at bein told every slight circumstance of the manner in which Dr. Johnson contrived to amuse his solitary hours. He sometimes employed himself in che-

(1) Which I communicated to him from his Lordship, but it has not yet been published. I have a copy of it. — B. — The few notices concerning Dryden, which Lord Hailes had collected, the author afterwards gave me. — M.

mistry, sometimes in watering and pruning a vine, sometimes in small experiments, at which those who may smile should recollect that there are moments which admit of being soothed only by trifles. (1)

On the 20th of September I defended myself against his suspicion of me, which I did not deserve; and added, "Pray let us write frequently. A whim strikes me, that we should send off a sheet once a week, like a stage-coach, whether it be full or not; nay, though it should be empty. The very sight of your handwriting would comfort me; and were a sheet to be thus sent regularly, we should much

(1) In one of his manuscript Diaries, there is the following entry, which marks his curious minute attention: — "July 26. 1768. — I shaved my nail by accident in whetting the knife, about an eighth of an inch from the bottom, and about a fourth from the top. This I measure that I may know the growth of nails; the whole is about five eighths of an inch." Another of the same kind appears August 7. 1779: "*Partem brachii dextri carpo proximam et cutem pectoris circa mamillam dextram rasi, ut notum fieret quanto temporis pili renovarentur.*" And, "August 15. 1783: — I cut from the vine 41 leaves, which weighed five oz. and a half, and eight scruples: I lay them upon my bookcase, to see what weight they will lose by drying." — B. — Dr. Johnson was always exceeding fond of chemistry; and we made up a sort of laboratory at Streatham one summer, and diverted ourselves with drawing essences and colouring liquors. But the danger in which Mr. Thrale found his friend one day, when I was driven to London, and he had got the children and servants assembled round him to see some experiments performed, put an end to all our entertainment; as Mr. Thrale was persuaded that his short sight would have occasioned his destruction in a moment, by bringing him close to a fierce and violent flame. Indeed, it was a perpetual miracle that he did not set himself on fire reading abed, as was his constant custom, when quite unable even to keep clear of mischief with our best help; and accordingly the foretops of all his wigs were burned by the candle down to the very network. Future experiments in chemistry, however, were too dangerous, and Mr. Thrale insisted that we should do no more towards finding the philosopher's stone. — PIOZZI.

oftener convey something, were it only a few kind words."

My friend, Colonel James Stuart ([1]), second son of the Earl of Bute, who had distinguished himself as a good officer of the Bedfordshire militia, had taken a public-spirited resolution to serve his country in its difficulties, by raising a regular regiment, and taking the command of it himself. This, in the heir of the immense property of Wortley, was highly honourable. Having been in Scotland recruiting, he obligingly asked me to accompany him to Leeds, then the head-quarters of his corps; from thence to London for a short time, and afterwards to other places to which the regiment might be ordered. Such an offer, at a time of the year when I had full leisure, was very pleasing; especially as I was to accompany a man of sterling good sense information, discernment, and conviviality, and was to have a second crop, in one year, of London and Johnson. Of this I informed my illustrious friend in characteristical warm terms, in a letter dated the 30th of September, from Leeds.

On Monday, October 4., I called at his house before he was up. He sent for me to his bedside, and expressed his satisfaction at this incidental meeting, with as much vivacity as if he had been in the gaiety of youth. He called briskly, "Frank, go and get coffee, and let us breakfast *in splendour*."

(1) Who assumed successively the names of Wortley and Mackenzie, but was best known as Mr. Stuart Wortley. He was the father of Lord Wharncliffe, and died in 1814. — C.

During this visit to London I had several interviews with him, which it is unnecessary to distinguish particularly. I consulted him as to the appointment of guardians to my children in case of my death. "Sir," said he, "do not appoint a number of guardians. When there are many, they trust one to another, and the business is neglected. I would advise you to choose only one: let him be a man of respectable character, who, for his own credit, will do what is right; let him be a rich man, so that he may be under no temptation to take advantage; and let him be a man of business, who is used to conduct affairs with ability and expertness, to whom, therefore, the execution of the trust will not be burthensome."

LETTER 354. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Oct. 5. 1779. — When Mr. Boswell waited on Mr. Thrale in Southwark, I directed him to watch all appearances with close attention, and bring me his observations. At his return he told me, that without previous intelligence he should not have discovered that Mr. Thrale had been lately ill.

"Oct. 8. 1779. — On Sunday the gout left my ankles, and I went very commodiously to church. On Monday night I felt my feet uneasy. On Tuesday I was quite lame: that night I took an opiate, having first taken physic and fasted. Towards morning on Wednesday the pain remitted. Bozzy came to me, and much talk we had. I fasted another day; and on Wednesday night could walk tolerably. On Thursday, finding myself mending, I ventured on my dinner, which I think has a little interrupted my convalescence. To-day I have again taken physic, and eaten only some

stewed apples. I hope to starve it away. It is now no worse than it was at Brighthelmstone."

On Sunday, October 10., we dined together at Mr. Strahan's. The conversation having turned on the prevailing practice of going to the East Indies in quest of wealth; — JOHNSON. "A man had better have ten thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in England, than twenty thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in India, because you must compute what you *give* for money; and the man who has lived ten years in India has given up ten years of social comfort, and all those advantages which arise from living in England. The ingenious Mr. Brown, distinguished by the name of *Capability Brown*, told me, that he was once at the seat of Lord Clive, who had returned from India with great wealth; and that he showed him at the door of his bed-chamber a large chest, which he said he had once had full of gold; upon which Brown observed, 'I am glad you can bear it so near your bed-chamber.'"

We talked of the state of the poor in London. JOHNSON. "Saunders Welch, the justice, who was once high-constable of Holborn, and had the best opportunities of knowing the state of the poor, told me, that I under-rated the number, when I computed that twenty a week, that is, above a thousand a year, died of hunger; not absolutely of immediate hunger, but of the wasting and other diseases which are the consequences of hunger. This happens only in so large a place as London, where people

are not known. What we are told about the great sums got by begging is not true: the trade is overstocked. And, you may depend upon it, there are many who cannot get work. A particular kind of manufacture fails: those who have been used to work at it can, for some time, work at nothing else. You meet a man begging; you charge him with idleness: he says, 'I am willing to labour. Will you give me work?' — 'I cannot.' — 'Why, then, you have no right to charge me with idleness.'"

We left Mr. Strahan's at seven, as Johnson had said he intended to go to evening prayers. As we walked alone, he complained of a little gout in his toe, and said, "I sha'n't go to prayers to-night: I shall go to-morrow: whenever I miss church on a Sunday, I resolve to go another day. But I do not always do it." This was a fair exhibition of that vibration between pious resolutions and indolence, which many of us have too often experienced.

I went home with him, and we had a long quiet conversation.

I read him a letter from Dr. Hugh Blair concerning Pope (in writing whose life he was now employed), which I shall insert as a literary curiosity. (1)

(1) The Rev. Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, in the preface to his valuable edition of Archbishop King's "Essay on the Origin of Evil," mentions that the principles maintained in it had been adopted by Pope in his "Essay on Man;" and adds, "The fact, notwithstanding such denial (Bishop Warburton's), might have been strictly verified by an unexceptionable testimony, viz. that of the late Lord Bathurst, who saw the very same system of the τὸ βέλτιον (taken from the Archbishop) in Lord Bolingbroke's own hand, lying before Mr. Pope, while he was composing his Essay." This is respectable evidence: but that of Dr. Blair is more direct from the fountain-head, as well as more full. Let

LETTER 355. DR. BLAIR TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Broughton Park, Sept. 21. 1779.

"DEAR SIR, — In the year 1763, being at London, I was carried by Dr. John Blair, Prebendary of Westminster, to dine at old Lord Bathurst's, where we found the late Mr. Mallet, Sir James Porter, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, the late Dr. Macaulay, and two or three more. The conversation turning on Mr. Pope, Lord Bathurst told us, that the 'Essay on Man' was originally composed by Lord Bolingbroke in prose, and that Mr. Pope did no more than put it into verse: that he had read Lord Bolingbroke's manuscript in his own handwriting; and remembered well, that he was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose, or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse. When Lord Bathurst told this, Mr. Mallet bade me attend, and remember this remarkable piece of information; as, by the course of nature, I might survive his lordship, and be a witness of his having said so. The conversation was indeed too remarkable to be forgotten. A few days after, meeting with you, who were then also at London, you will remember that I mentioned to you what had passed on this subject, as I was much struck with this anecdote. But what ascertains my recollection of it, beyond doubt, is, that being accustomed to keep a journal of what passed when I was at London, which I wrote out every evening, I find the particulars of the above information, just as I have now given them, distinctly marked; and am thence enabled

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me add to it that of Dr. Joseph Warton: "The late Lord Bathurst repeatedly assured me that he had read the whole scheme of the 'Essay on Man,' in the handwriting of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate." — *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, vol. ii. p. 62.

to fix this conversation to have passed on Friday, the 22d of April, 1763.

"I remember also distinctly (though I have not for this the authority of my journal), that the conversation going on concerning Mr. Pope, I took notice of a report which had been sometimes propagated that he did not understand Greek. Lord Bathurst said to me that he knew that to be false; for that part of the Iliad was translated by Mr. Pope in his house in the country; and that in the morning when they assembled at breakfast, Mr. Pope used frequently to repeat, with great rapture, the Greek lines which he had been translating, and then to give them his version of them, and to compare them together.

"If these circumstances can be of any use to Dr. Johnson, you have my full liberty to give them to him. I beg you will, at the same time, present to him my most respectful compliments, with best wishes for his success and fame in all his literary undertakings. I am, with great respect, my dearest Sir, your most affectionate and obliged humble servant, HUGH BLAIR."

JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is too strongly stated. Pope may have had from Bolinbroke the philosophic *stamina* of his Essay; and admitting this to be true, Lord Bathurst did not intentionally falsify. But the thing is not true in the latitude that Blair seems to imagine; we are sure that the poetical imagery, which makes a great part of the poem, was Pope's own. It is amazing, Sir, what deviations there are from precise truth, in the account which is given of almost every thing. I told Mrs. Thrale, 'You have so little anxiety about truth, that you never tax your memory with the exact thing.' Now what is the use of the me

mory to truth, if one is careless of exactness? Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' are very exact; but they contain mere dry particulars. They are to be considered as a Dictionary. You know such things are there; and may be looked at when you please. Robertson paints; but the misfortune is, you are sure he does not know the people whom he paints; so you cannot suppose a likeness. Characters should never be given by an historian, unless he knew the people whom he describes, or copies from those who knew them."

BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, do people play this trick which I observe now, when I look at your grate, putting the shovel against it to make the fire burn?" JOHNSON. "They play the trick, but it does not make the fire burn. (1) *There* is a better (setting the poker perpendicularly up at right angles with the grate). In days of superstition they thought, as it made a cross with the bars, it would drive away the witch."

BOSWELL. "By associating with you, Sir, I am always getting an accession of wisdom. But perhaps a man, after knowing his own character — the limited strength of his own mind — should not be desirous of having too much wisdom, considering,

(1) It certainly does make the fire burn: by repelling the air, it throws a blast on the fire, and so performs the part in some degree of a blower or bellows. — KEARNEY. — Dr. Kearney's observation applies only to the *shovel*; but by those who have faith in the experiment, the *poker* is supposed to be equally efficacious. After all, it is possible that there may be some magnetic or electrical influence which, in the progress of science, may be explained; and what has been thought a vulgar trick, may be proved to be a philosophical experiment. — C.

quid valeant humeri, how little he can carry." JOHNSON. "Sir, be as wise as you can; let a man be *aliis lætus, sapiens sibi:*

> 'Though pleased to see the dolphin's play,
> I mind my compass and my way.' (1)

You may be wise in your study in the morning, and gay in company at a tavern in the evening. Every man is to take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think."

He said, "Dodsley first mentioned to me the scheme of an English Dictionary; but I had long thought of it." BOSWELL. "You did not know what you were undertaking." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I knew very well what I was undertaking, and very well how to do it, and have done it very well." BOSWELL. "An excellent climax! and it *has* availed you. In your preface you say, 'What would it avail me in this gloom of solitude?' You have been agreeably mistaken."

In his life of Milton, he observes, "I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously paid to this great man by his biographers; every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence." I had, before I read this observation, been desirous of showing that respect to Johnson, by various inquiries. Finding him this evening in a very good humour, I prevailed on him to give me an exact list of his places

(1) "The Spleen," a poem [by Matthew Green].

of residence, since he entered the metropolis as an author, which I subjoin in a note. (1)

I mentioned to him a dispute between a friend of mine and his lady, concerning conjugal infidelity, which my friend had maintained was by no means so bad in the husband as in the wife. JOHNSON. "Your friend was in the right, Sir. Between a man and his Maker it is a different question: but between a man and his wife, a husband's infidelity is nothing. They are connected by children, by fortune, by serious considerations of community. Wise married women don't trouble themselves about infidelity in their husbands." BOSWELL. "To be sure there is a great difference between the offence of infidelity in a man and that of his wife." JOHNSON. "The difference is boundless. The man imposes no bastards upon his wife." (2)

(1) 1. Exeter Street, off Catherine Street, Strand (1737).
2. Greenwich (1737).
3. Woodstock Street, near Hanover Square (1737).
4. Castle Street, Cavendish Square, No. 6. (1738).
5. Boswell Court.
6. Strand.
7. Strand again.
8. Bow Street.
9. Holborn.
10. Fetter Lane.
11. Holborn again (at the Golden Anchor, Holborn Bars, 1748).
12. Gough Square (1748).
13. Staple Inn (1758).
14. Gray's Inn.
15. Inner Temple Lane, No. 1. (1760).
16. Johnson Court, Fleet Street, No. 7. (1765).
17. Bolt Court, Fleet Street, No. 8. (1776).

(2) This seems too *narrow* an illustration of a "*boundless* difference." The introduction of a bastard into a family, though a great injustice and a great crime, is only one consequence (and that an occasional and accidental one) of a greater crime

Here it may be questioned, whether Johnson was entirely in the right. I suppose it will not be controverted, that the difference in the degree of criminality is very great, on account of consequences: but still it may be maintained, that, independent of moral obligation, infidelity is by no means a light offence in a husband; because it must hurt a delicate attachment, in which a mutual constancy is implied, with such refined sentiments as Massinger has exhibited in his play of "The Picture." Johnson probably at another time would have admitted

and a more afflicting injustice. The precaution of Julia, alluded to *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 143., did not render her innocent. In a moral and in a religious view, the guilt is no doubt equal in man or woman, but have not both Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell overlooked, on this occasion, a *social* view of this subject, to which they had most justly alluded in a former conversation, and which is, perhaps, the true reason of the greater indulgence which is generally afforded to the infidelity of the man — I mean the effect on the personal character of the different sexes. The crime does not seem to alter or debase the qualities of the *man*, in any essential degree; but when the superior purity and delicacy of the *woman* is *once contaminated* it is destroyed — *facilis descensus Averni* — she generally falls into utter degradation, and thence, probably, it is that society makes a distinction conformable to its own interests — it connives at the offence of men, because men are not much deteriorated *as members of general society* by the offence, and it is severe against the offence of women, because women, as members of society, are utterly degraded by it. This view of the subject will be illustrated by a converse proposition — for instance. The world thinks not the worse, nay rather the better, of a *woman* for wanting *courage*; but such a defect in a *man* is wholly unpardonable, because, as Johnson wisely and wittily said, "he who has not the virtue of courage has no security for any other virtue." Society, therefore, requires *chastity* from *women* as it does *courage* from *men*. See also Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, b. vii. ch. 8., where he proceeds on the principle, that chastity is, in the *female* character, the foundation and guardian of every other virtue. — C.

this opinion. And let it be kept in remembrance, that he was very careful not to give any encouragement to irregular conduct. A gentleman, not adverting to the distinction made by him upon this subject, supposed a case of singular perverseness in a wife, and heedlessly said, "That then he thought a husband might do as he pleased with a safe conscience." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, this is wild indeed (smiling); you must consider that fornication is a crime in a single man, and you cannot have more liberty by being married."

He this evening expressed himself strongly against the Roman Catholics, observing, "In every thing in which they differ from us, they are wrong." He was even against the invocation of saints; in short, he was in the humour of opposition.

Having regretted to him that I had learnt little Greek, as is too generally the case in Scotland; that I had for a long time hardly applied at all to the study of that noble language, and that I was desirous of being told by him what method to follow; he recommended as easy helps, Sylvanus's "First Book of the Iliad;" Dawson's "Lexicon to the Greek New Testament;" and "Hesiod," with "Pasoris Lexicon" at the end of it.

LETTER 356. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, Oct. 11. 1779.

"I do not see why you should trouble yourself with physicians while Mr. Thrale grows better. Company and bustle will, I hope, complete his cure. Let him

gallop over the Downs in the morning, call his friends about him to dinner, and frisk in the rooms at night, and outrun time and outface misfortune. Notwithstanding all authorities against bleeding, Mr. Thrale bled himself well ten days ago.

"You will lead a jolly life, and perhaps think little of me; but I have been invited twice to Mrs. Vesey's *conversation*, but have not gone. The gout that was in my ankles, when Queeny criticised my gait, passed into my toe, but I have hunted it, and starved it, and it makes no figure. It has drawn some attention, for Lord and Lady Lucan sent to inquire after me. This is all the news that I have to tell you. Yesterday I dined with Mr. Strahan, and Boswell was there. We shall be both to-morrow at Mr. Ramsay's."

On Tuesday, October 12., I dined with him at Mr. Ramsay's, with Lord Newhaven (1), and some other company, none of whom I recollect, but a beautiful Miss Graham (2), a relation [niece] of his Lordship's, who asked Dr. Johnson to hob or nob with her. He was flattered by such pleasing attention, and politely told her, he never drank wine; but if she would drink a glass of water, he was much at her service. She accepted. "Oho, Sir!" said Lord Newhaven, "you are caught." JOHNSON. "Nay, I do not see *how I am caught*; but if I am caught, I don't want to get free again. If I am

(1) William Mayne, Esq. was created a Baronet in 1763; a privy counsellor in Ireland in 1766; and in 1776 advanced to the Irish peerage by the title of Baron Newhaven. He took a busy part in the intrigues, jobs, and squabbles which constituted the Irish politics of his day. — C.

(2) Now the lady of Sir Henry Dashwood, Bart. — B. — To whom she was married in July 1780. — C.

caught, I hope to be kept." Then when the two glasses of water were brought, smiling placidly to the young lady, he said, "Madam, let us *reciprocate*."

Lord Newhaven and Johnson carried on an argument for some time concerning the Middlesex election. Johnson said, "Parliament may be considered as bound by law, as a man is bound where there is nobody to tie the knot. As it is clear that the House of Commons may expel, and expel again and again, why not allow of the power to incapacitate for that parliament, rather than have a perpetual contest kept up between parliament and the people." Lord Newhaven took the opposite side; but respectfully said, "I speak with great deference to you, Dr. Johnson; I speak to be instructed." This had its full effect on my friend. He bowed his head almost as low as the table to a complimenting nobleman, and called out, "My lord, my lord, I do not desire all this ceremony; let us tell our minds to one another quietly." After the debate was over, he said, "I have got lights on the subject to-day, which I had not before." This was a great deal from him, especially as he had written a pamphlet upon it.

He observed, "The House of Commons was originally not a privilege of the people, but a check, for the crown, on the House of Lords. I remember, Henry VIII. wanted them to do something; they hesitated in the morning, but did it in the afternoon. He told them, 'It is well you did; or half your heads should have been upon Temple Bar.' But the House of Commons is now no longer under the

power of the crown, and therefore must be bribed." He added, "I have no delight in talking of public affairs."

Of his fellow collegian (1), the celebrated Mr. George Whitefield, he said, "Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does: he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley (2) to preach a sermon standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that. I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt; I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions."

What I have preserved of his conversation during the remainder of my stay in London at this time is only what follows:—I told him that when I objected to keeping company with a notorious infidel, a cele-

(1) George Whitfield, or Whitefield, did not enter at Pembroke College before November 1732, more than twelve months after Johnson's name was off the books, and nearly three years after he had ceased to be resident at Oxford; so that, strictly speaking, they were not fellow collegians, though they were both of the same college. — HALL.

(2) Philip Astley, a celebrated horse-rider, who first exhibited equestrian pantomimes, in which his son (who survived his father but a short time) rode with great grace and agility. Astley had at once theatres in Paris, London, and Dublin, and migrated with his actors, biped and quadruped, from one to the other. — C. [The remains of both father and son are deposited in the cemetery of *Père la Chaise*.]

brated friend of ours said to me, "I do not think that men who live laxly in the world, as you and I do, can with propriety assume such an authority: Dr. Johnson may, who is uniformly exemplary in his conduct. But it is not very consistent to shun an infidel to-day, and get drunk to-morrow." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, this is sad reasoning. Because a man cannot be right in all things, is he to be right in nothing? Because a man sometimes gets drunk, is he therefore to steal? (1) This doctrine would very soon bring a man to the gallows."

After all, however, it is a difficult question how far sincere Christians should associate with the avowed enemies of religion; for, in the first place, almost every man's mind may be more or less "corrupted by evil communications;" secondly, the world may very naturally suppose that they are not really in earnest in religion, who can easily bear its opponents; and thirdly, if the profane find themselves quite well received by the pious, one of the checks upon an open declaration of their infidelity, and one of the probable chances of obliging them

(1) Surely this is not a fair statement of the question. The celebrated friend (Mr. Burke is the person usually so designated in these volumes) only modestly said, that none but a person *uniformly exemplary*, and above all possibility of reproach for arrogance or inconsistency, could venture to assume such an authority over society as to attempt to exclude a person for theoretical opinions. Johnson himself never did so: the strongest expression of his feeling on this point that I remember, was his refusing to be introduced to (Hannah More says to shake hands with) the Abbé Raynal; and we know that when Boswell consulted him about refusing to do law business of a Sunday, Johnson advised him to comply with the practice of the world, till he should become so considerable as to be authorised to set an example. — C. 1835.

seriously to reflect, which their being shunned would do, is removed.

He, I know not why, showed upon all occasions an aversion to go to Ireland, where I proposed to him that we should make a tour. JOHNSON. "It is the last place that I should wish to travel." BOSWELL. "Should you not like to see Dublin, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; Dublin is only a worse capital." BOSWELL. "Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?" JOHNSON. "Worth seeing? yes; but not worth going to see."

Yet he had a kindness for the Irish nation; and thus generously expressed himself to a gentleman from that country, on the subject of an union which artful politicians have often had in view: "Do not make an union with us, Sir. We should unite with you only to rob you. We should have robbed the Scotch, if they had had any thing of which we could have robbed them."

Of an acquaintance of ours, whose manners and every thing about him, though expensive, were coarse, he said, "Sir, you see in him vulgar prosperity."

A foreign minister of no very high talents, who had been in his company for a considerable time quite overlooked, happened luckily to mention that he had read some of his "*Rambler*" in Italian, and admired it much. This pleased him greatly; he observed that the title had been translated *Il Genio errante*, though I have been told it was rendered more ludicrously *Il Vagabondo*; and finding that this minister gave such a proof of his taste, he was

all attention to him, and on the first remark which he made, however simple, exclaimed, "The ambassador says well; his Excellency observes ——;" and then he expanded and enriched the little that had been said in so strong a manner, that it appeared something of consequence. This was exceedingly entertaining to the company who were present, and many a time afterwards it furnished a pleasant topic of merriment. "*The ambassador says well*" became a laughable term of applause when no mighty matter had been expressed.

LETTER 357. TO MRS THRALE.

"Oct. 16. 1779.

"My foot gives me very little trouble; but it is not yet well. I have dined, since you saw me, not so often as once in two days. But I am told how well I look; and I really think I get more mobility. I dined on Tuesday with Ramsay, and on Thursday with Paoli, who talked of coming to see you, till I told him of your migration.

"Mrs. Williams is not yet returned; but discord and discontent reign in my humble habitation as in the palaces of monarchs. Mr. Levet and Mrs. Desmoulins have vowed eternal hate. Levet is the more insidious, and wants me to turn her out. Poor Williams writes word that she is no better, and has left off her physic. Mr. Levet has seen Dr. Lewis, who declares himself hopeless of doing her any good. Lawrence desponded some time ago. I thought I had a little fever some time, but it seems to be starved away. Bozzy says, he never saw me so well."

LETTER 358. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"Oct. 19. 1779.

"DEAREST MADAM, — You are extremely kind in taking so much trouble. My foot is almost well; and one of my first visits will certainly be to Dover Street.(1) You will do me a great favour if you will buy for me the prints of Mr. Burke, Mr. Dyer, and Dr. Goldsmith, as you know good impressions. If any of your own pictures are engraved, buy them for me. I am fitting up a little room with prints. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

I left London on Monday, October 18., and accompanied Colonel Stuart to Chester, where his regiment was to lie for some time.

LETTER 359. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Chester, Oct. 20. 1779.

MY DEAR SIR, — It was not till one o'clock on Monday morning that Colonel Stuart and I left London; for we chose to bid a cordial adieu to Lord Mountstuart, who was to set out on that day on his embassy to Turin. We drove on excellently, and reached Lichfield in good time enough that night. The colonel had heard so preferable a character of the George, that he would not put up at the Three Crowns, so that I did not see our host, Wilkins. We found at the George as good accommodation as we could wish to have, and I fully enjoyed the comfortable thought that *I was in Lichfield again*. Next morning it rained very hard; and as I had much to do in a little time, I ordered a postchaise, and between eight and nine sallied forth to make a round of visits. I first went to Mr. Green, hoping to have

(1) Where Miss Reynolds lived. — C.

had him to accompany me to all my other friends; but he was engaged to attend the Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was then lying at Lichfield very ill of the gout. Having taken a hasty glance at the additions to Green's museum, from which it was not easy to break away, I next went to the Friary, where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early; but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be closely associated with yours, soon made all easy; and Mrs. Cobb (1) and Miss Adey re-assumed their seats at the breakfast-table, which they had quitted with some precipitation. They received me with the kindness of an old acquaintance; and, after we had joined in a cordial chorus to *your* praise, Mrs. Cobb gave *me* the high satisfaction of hearing that you said, 'Boswell is a man who I believe never left a house without leaving a wish for his return.' And she afterwards added, that she bid you tell me, that if ever I came to Lichfield, she hoped I would take a bed at the Friary. From thence I drove to Peter Garrick's (2), where I also found a very flattering welcome. He appeared to me to enjoy his usual cheerfulness; and he very kindly asked me to come when I could, and pass a week with him. From Mr. Garrick's I went to the Palace to wait on Mr. Seward. I was first entertained by his lady and daughter, he himself being in bed with a cold, according to his valetudinary custom. But he desired to see me; and I found him dressed in his black gown, with a white flannel night-

(1) Mrs. Cobb was the daughter of Mr. Hammond, an apothecary (*antè*, Vol. I. p. 33.), and the widow of a mercer, who had retired from business, and resided at the Friary. Miss Adey was her niece, daughter of the town-clerk of Lichfield: she married William Sneyd, Esq. of Belmont House, near Cheadle, and died 1829, æt. 87. — HARWOOD.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 194., and Vol. VI. p. 94.—C.—[Peter Garrick died at Lichfield, December 12. 1795, at the age of eighty-six.]

gown above it; so that he looked like a Dominican friar. He was good-humoured and polite; and under his roof too my reception was very pleasing. I then proceeded to Stowhill, and first paid my respects to Mrs. Gastrell, whose conversation I was not willing to quit. But my sand-glass was now beginning to run low, as I could not trespass too long on the Colonel's kindness, who obligingly waited for me; so I hastened to Mrs. Aston's, whom I found much better than I feared I should; and there I met a brother-in-law of these ladies, who talked much of you, and very well too, as it appeared to me. It then only remained to visit Mrs. Lucy Porter, which I did, I really believe, with sincere satisfaction on both sides. I am sure I was glad to see her again; and as I take her to be very honest, I trust she was glad to see me again, for she expressed herself so that I could not doubt of her being in earnest. What a great keystone of kindness, my dear Sir, were you that morning; for we were all held together by our common attachment to you! I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency than I did those two at Lichfield. Let me not entertain any suspicion that this is idle vanity. Will not you confirm me in my persuasion, that he who finds himself so regarded has just reason to be happy?

"We got to Chester about midnight on Tuesday; and here again I am in a state of much enjoyment. Colonel Stuart and his officers treat me with all the civility I could wish; and I play my part admirably. *Lætus aliis, sapiens sibi*, the classical sentence which you, I imagine, invented the other day, is exemplified in my present existence. The Bishop (1), to whom I had the honour to be known several years ago, shows me much attention; and I am edified by his conversation. I must not omit to tell you, that his Lordship

(1) Doctor Porteus, afterwards Bishop of London; in which see he died, May 14. 1808, in his seventy-eighth year. — C.

admires, very highly, your prefaces to the Poets. I am daily obtaining an extension of agreeable acquaintance, so that I am kept in animated variety; and the study of the place itself, by the assistance of books and of the Bishop, is sufficient occupation. Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw. But I will not enter upon it at all in this letter.

"How long I shall stay here I cannot yet say. I told a very pleasing young lady (1), niece to one of the prebendaries at whose house I saw her, 'I have come to Chester, Madam, I cannot tell how; and far less can I tell how I am to get away from it.' Do not think me too juvenile. I beg it of you, my dear Sir, to favour me with a letter while I am here, and add to the happiness of a happy friend, who is ever, with affectionate veneration, most sincerely yours,

"James Boswell.

"If you do not write directly, so as to catch me here, I shall be disappointed. Two lines from you will keep my lamp burning bright."

Letter 360. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt Court, Oct. 25. 1779.

"Dearest Madam, — Mrs. Gastrell is so kind as to write to me, and yet I always write to you; but I consider what is written to either as written to both. Public affairs do not seem to promise much amendment, and the nation is now full of distress. What will be the event of things none can tell. We may still hope for better times.

"My health, which I began to recover when I was in the country, continues still in a good state: it costs me, indeed, some physic, and something of abstinence,

(1) Miss Letitia Barnston.

but it pays the cost. I wish, dear Madam, I could hear a little of your improvements.

"Here is no news. The talk of the invasion seems to be over. But a very turbulent session of parliament is expected; though turbulence is not likely to do any good. Those are happiest who are out of the noise and tumult. There will be no great violence of faction at Stowhill; and that it may be free from that and all other inconvenience and disturbance is the sincere wish of all your friends. I am, dear Madam, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 361. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

London, Oct. 27. 1779.

"DEAR SIR, — Why should you importune me so earnestly to write? Of what importance can it be to hear of distant friends, to a man who finds himself welcome wherever he goes, and makes new friends faster than he can want them? If to the delight of such universal kindness of reception any thing can be added by knowing that you retain my good-will, you may indulge yourself in the full enjoyment of that small addition.

"I am glad that you made the round of Lichfield with so much success. The oftener you are seen, the more you will be liked. It was pleasing to me to read that Mrs. Aston was so well, and that Lucy Porter was so glad to see you.

"In the place where you now are, there is much to be observed; and you will easily procure yourself skilful directors. But what will you do to keep away the *black dog* (1) that worries you at home? If you would,

(1) This was a phrase in the familiar society at Streatham to express hypochondriacal anxieties of mind. It is frequently used in the correspondence between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale and is equivalent to the "*dragons*" of Madame de Sévigné. — C.

in compliance with your father's advice, inquire into the old tenures and old charters of Scotland, you would certainly open to yourself many striking scenes of the manners of the middle ages. The feudal system, in a country half-barbarous, is naturally productive of some anomalies in civil life. The knowledge of past times is naturally growing less in all cases not of public record; and the past time of Scotland is so unlike the present, that it is already difficult for a Scotchman to image the economy of his grandfather. Do not be tardy nor negligent; but gather up eagerly what can yet be found. (1)

"We have, I think, once talked of another project, a history of the late insurrection in Scotland, with all its incidents. Many falsehoods are passing into uncontradicted history. Voltaire, who loved a striking story, has told what he could not find to be true.

"You may make collections for either of these projects, or for both, as opportunities occur, and digest your materials at leisure. The great direction which Burton has left to men disordered like you is this, *Be not solitary, be not idle;* which I would thus modify:—If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle.

"There is a letter for you from your humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 362. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt Court, Nov. 5. 1779.

Dearest Madam,—Having had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Boswell that he found you better than

(1) I have a valuable collection made by my father, which, with some additions and illustrations of my own, I intend to publish. I have some hereditary claim to be an antiquary; not only from my father, but as being descended, by the mother's side, from the able and learned Sir John Skene, whose merit bids defiance to all the attempts which have been made to lessen his fame.

he expected, I will not forbear to tell you how much was delighted with the news. May your health increase and increase till you are as well as you can wish yourself, or I can wish you!

"My friends tell me that my health improves too. It is certain that I use both physic and abstinence; and my endeavours have been blessed with more success than at my age I could reasonably hope. I please myself with the thoughts of visiting you next year in so robust a state, that I shall not be afraid of the hill between Mrs. Gastrell's house and yours, nor think it necessary to rest myself between Stowhill and Lucy Porter's.

"Of public affairs I can give you no very comfortable account. The invasion has vanished for the present, as I expected. I never believed that any invasion was intended.

"But whatever we have escaped, we have done nothing, nor are likely to do better another year. We, however, who have no part of the nation's welfare intrusted to our management, have nothing to do but to serve God, and leave the world submissively in his hands.

"All trade is dead, and pleasure is scarce alive. Nothing almost is purchased but such things as the buyer cannot do without; so that a general sluggishness and general discontent are spread over the town. All the trades of luxury and elegance are nearly at a stand. What the parliament, when it meets, will do, and indeed what it ought to do, is very difficult to say.

"Pray set Mrs. Gastrell, who is a dear good lady, to write to me from time to time; for I have great delight in hearing from you, especially when I hear any good news of your health. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 363. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Carlisle, Nov. 7. 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR, — That I should importune you to write to me at Chester is not wonderful, when you consider what an avidity I have for delight; and that the *amor* of pleasure, like the *amor nummi*, increases in proportion with the quantity which we possess of it. Your letter, so full of polite kindness and masterly counsel, came like a large treasure upon me, while already glittering with riches. I was quite enchanted at Chester, so that I could with difficulty quit it. But the enchantment was the reverse of that of Circé; for so far was there from being any thing sensual in it, that I was *all mind*. I do not mean all reason only; for my fancy was kept finely in play. And why not? If you please I will send you a copy or an abridgment of my Chester journal, which is truly a log-book of felicity.

"The Bishop treated me with a kindness which was very flattering. I told him that you regretted you had seen so little of Chester. His Lordship bade me tell you, that he should be glad to show you more of it. I am proud to find the friendship with which you honour me is known in so many places.

"I arrived here late last night. Our friend the Dean (1) has been gone from hence some months; but I am told at my inn, that he is very *populous* (popular). However, I found Mr. Law, the Archdeacon, son to the Bishop (2), and with him I have breakfasted and dined very agreeably. I got acquainted with him at the assizes here, about a year and a half ago. He is a man of great variety of knowledge, uncommon genius, and, I believe, sincere religion. I received the holy sacrament in the cathedral in the morning, this being

(1) Dr. Percy. — C.

(2) Dr. Edmond Law, master of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, Bishop of Carlisle, in which see he died in 1787. — C.

the first Sunday in the month; and was at prayers there in the evening. It is divinely cheering to me to think that there is a cathedral so near Auchinleck; and I now leave Old England in such a state of mind as I am thankful to God for granting me.

"The *black dog* that worries me at home I cannot but dread; yet as I have been for some time past in a military train, I trust I shall *repulse* him. To hear from you will animate me like the sound of a trumpet; I therefore hope, that soon after my return to the northern field, I shall receive a few lines from you.

"Colonel Stuart did me the honour to escort me in his carriage to show me Liverpool, and from thence back again to Warrington, where we parted. (1) In justice to my valuable wife, I must inform you she wrote to me, that as I was so happy; she would not be so selfish as to wish me to return sooner than business absolutely required my presence. She made my clerk write to me a post or two after to the same purpose, by commission from her; and this day a kind letter from her met me at the post-office here, acquainting me that she and the little ones were well, and expressing all their wishes for my return home. I am, more and more, my dear Sir, your affectionate and obliged humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 364. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Nov. 13. 1779.

"DEAR SIR, — Your last letter was not only kind, but fond. But I wish you to get rid of all intellectual excesses, and neither to exalt your pleasures, nor aggra-

(1) His regiment was afterwards ordered to Jamaica, where he accompanied it, and almost lost his life by the climate. This impartial order I should think a sufficient refutation of the idle rumour that "there was still something behind the throne greater than the throne itself."

vate your vexations, beyond their real and natural state. Why should you not be as happy at Edinburgh as at Chester? *In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit usquam.* Please yourself with your wife and children, and studies, and practice.

"I have sent a petition (1) from Lucy Porter, with which I leave it to your discretion whether it is proper to comply. Return me her letter, which I have sent that you may know the whole case, and not be seduced to any thing that you may afterwards repent. Miss Doxy perhaps you know to be Mr. Garrick's niece.

"If Dean Percy can be popular at Carlisle, he may be very happy. He has in his disposal two livings, each equal or almost equal in value to the deanery; he may take one himself, and give the other to his son.

"How near is the cathedral to Auchinleck, that you are so much delighted with it? It is, I suppose, at least an hundred and fifty miles off. However, if you are pleased, it is so far well. Let me know what reception you have from your father, and the state of his health. Please him as much as you can, and add no pain to his last years.

"Of our friends here I can recollect nothing to tell you. I have neither seen nor heard of Langton. Beauclerk is just returned from Brighthelmstone, I am told, much better. Mr. Thrale and his family are still there; and his health is said to be visibly improved. He has not bathed, but hunted. At Bolt Court there is much malignity, but of late little open hostility. (2) I have had a cold, but it is gone. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, &c. I am, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

On November 22. and December 21., I wrote to

(1) Requesting me to inquire concerning the family of a gentleman who was then paying his addresses to Miss Doxy.

(2) See *antè*, p. 232.

him from Edinburgh, giving a very favourable report of the family of Miss Doxy's lover; — that after a good deal of inquiry I had discovered the sister of Mr. Francis Stewart, one of his amanuenses when writing his Dictionary; — that I had, as desired by him, paid her a guinea for an old pocket-book of her brother's, which he had retained; — and that the good woman, who was in very moderate circumstances, but contented and placid, wondered at his scrupulous and liberal honesty, and received the guinea as if sent her by Providence; — that I had repeatedly begged of him to keep his promise to send me his letter to Lord Chesterfield; and that this *memento*, like *Delenda est Carthago*, must be in every letter that I should write to him, till I had obtained my object.

LETTER 365. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, Oct. 25. 1779.

"On Saturday I walked to Dover Street and back. Yesterday I dined with Sir Joshua. There was Mr. Eliot (1) of Cornwall, who inquired after my master. At night I was bespoken by Lady Lucan; but she was taken ill, and the assembly was put off. I am to dine with Renny to-morrow. Some old gentlewomen at the next door are in very great distress. Their little annuity comes from Jamaica, and is therefore uncertain and one of them has had a fall, and both are very helpless; and the poor have you to help them. Persuade my master to let me give them something for him. It will be bestowed upon real want."

(1) First Lord Eliot. See *post*, *sub* 30th March, 1781. — C.

CHAPTER X.

1780.

"Lives of the Poets" completed. — Dr. Lawrence — Loss of a Wife. — Death of Topham Beauclerk. — Letter-writing. — Mr. Melmoth. — Fitzosborne's Letters. — Somerset-House Exhibition. — Riots in London. — Lord George Gordon. — Mr. Akerman. — Correspondence. — Dr. Beattie. — Davies's "Life of Garrick." — Advice to a Young Clergyman. — Composition of Sermons. — Borough Election. — Lady Southwell. — Mr. Alexander Macbean. — Lord Thurlow. — Langton's Collectanea. — Dr. Franklin's "Demonax."

In 1780, the world was kept in impatience for the completion of his "Lives of the Poets," upon which he was employed so far as his indolence allowed him to labour.

I wrote to him on January 1. and March 13., sending him my notes of Lord Marchmont's information concerning Pope; — complaining that I had not heard from him for almost four months, though he was two letters in my debt; that I had suffered again from melancholy; — hoping that he had been in so much better company (the Poets), that he had not time to think of his distant friends; for if that were the case, I should have some recompence for my uneasiness; — that the state of my affairs did not admit of my coming to London this year; and beg

ging he would return me Goldsmith's two poems, with his lines marked.

His friend Dr. Lawrence having now suffered the greatest affliction to which a man is liable, and which Johnson himself had felt in the most severe manner, Johnson wrote to him in an admirable strain of sympathy and pious consolation.

LETTER 366. TO DR. LAWRENCE.

"Jan. 20. 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—At a time when all your friends ought to show their kindness, and with a character which ought to make all that know you your friends, you may wonder that you have yet heard nothing from me. I have been hindered by a vexatious and incessant cough, for which within these ten days I have been bled once, fasted four or five times, taken physic five times, and opiates, I think, six. This day it seems to remit.

"The loss, dear Sir, which you have lately suffered, I felt many years ago, and know therefore how much has been taken from you, and how little help can be had from consolation. He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes, and fears, and interest; from the only companion with whom he has shared much good or evil; and with whom he could set his mind at liberty, to retrace the past or anticipate the future. The continuity of being is lacerated; the settled course of sentiment and action is stopped; and life stands suspended and motionless, till it is driven by external causes into a new channel. But the time of suspense is dreadful.

"Our first recourse in this distressed solitude is, perhaps for want of habitual piety, to a gloomy acquiescence in necessity. Of two mortal beings, one must

lose the other. But surely there is a higher and better comfort to be drawn from the consideration of that Providence which watches over all, and a belief that the living and the dead are equally in the hands of God, who will reunite those whom he has separated, or who sees that it is best not to reunite. I am, dear Sir, &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 367. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"April 8. 1780.

"Dear Sir,—Well, I had resolved to send you the Chesterfield letter ([1]), but I will write once again without it. Never impose tasks upon mortals. To require two things is the way to have them both undone.

"For the difficulties which you mention in your affairs, I am sorry; but difficulty is now very general: it is not therefore less grievous, for there is less hope of help. I pretend not to give you advice, not knowing the state of your affairs; and general counsels about prudence and frugality would do you little good. You are, however, in the right not to increase your own perplexity by a journey hither; and I hope that by staying at home you will please your father.

"Poor dear Beauclerk—*nec, ut soles, dabis joca.* His wit and his folly, his acuteness and maliciousness, his merriment and reasoning, are now over. Such another will not often be found among mankind. ([2]) He

(1) See it *antè*, Vol. II. p. 7.—C.

(2) "His conversation could scarcely be equalled. He possessed an exquisite taste, various accomplishments, and the most perfect good breeding. He was eccentric—often querulous—entertaining a contempt for the generality of the world, which the politeness of his manners could not always conceal; but to those whom he liked, most generous and friendly. Devoted at one moment to pleasure, and at another to literature, sometimes absorbed in play, and sometimes in books, he was, altogether, one of the most accomplished, and, when in good humour, and

directed himself to be buried by the side of his mother; an instance of tenderness which I hardly expected. He has left his children to the care of Lady Di, and if she dies, of Mr. Langton, and of Mr. Leicester his relation, and a man of good character. His library has been offered to sale to the Russian ambassador. (1)

"Dr. Percy, notwithstanding all the noise of the newspapers, has had no literary loss. (2) Clothes and moveables were burnt to the value of about one hundred pounds; but his papers, and I think his books, were all preserved.

"Poor Mr. Thrale has been in extreme danger from an apoplectical disorder, and recovered, beyond the expectation of his physicians: he is now at Bath, that his mind may be quiet, and Mrs. Thrale and Miss are with him.

"Having told you what has happened to your friends, let me say something to you of yourself. You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude from those complaints that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is desirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed. Do not pretend to deny it; *manifestum habemus furem*. Make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself, never to mention your own mental diseases. If you are never to speak of them, you will think on them but little; and if you think little of them, they will molest you rarely. When you talk of them, it is plain that you want either praise or pity; for praise there is no room,

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surrounded by those who suited his fancy, one of the most agreeable men that could possibly exist." — LORD CHARLEMONT, *Life*, vol. i. p. 344. — C.

(1) His library was sold by public auction in April and May, 1781, for 5,011*l.* — M.

(2) By a fire in Northumberland House, where he had an apartment in which I have passed many an agreeable hour.

and pity will do you no good; therefore, from this hour speak no more, think no more, about them.

"Your transaction with Mrs. Stewart (1) gave me great satisfaction. I am much obliged to you for your attention. Do not lose sight of her. Your countenance may be of great credit, and of consequence of great advantage to her. The memory of her brother is yet fresh in my mind: he was an ingenious and worthy man. Please to make my compliments to your lady and to the young ladies. I should like to see them, pretty loves! I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

"Sam. Johnson."

LETTER 368. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, April 6. 1780.

"I have not quite neglected my *Lives*. Addison is a long one, but it is done. Prior is not short, and that is done too. I am upon Rowe, which cannot fill much paper. Seward (Mr. William) called on me one day and read Spence. (2) I dined yesterday at Mr. Jodrell's in a great deal of company. On Sunday I dine with Dr. Lawrence, and at night go to Mrs. Vesey. I have had a little cold, or two, or three; but I did not much mind them, for they were not very bad."

LETTER 369. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"London, April 8. 1780.

"Dear Madam,—I am indeed but a sluggish correspondent, and know not whether I shall much mend: however, I will try. I am glad that your oysters proved good, for I would have every thing good that belongs to you; and would have your health good, that you

(1) [See *antè*, p. 307.]

(2) Spence's very amusing anecdotes, which had been lent Johnson in manuscript: they were not printed till 1820.—C.

may enjoy the rest. My health is better than it has been for some years past; and, if I see Lichfield again, I hope to walk about it.

"Your brother's request I have not forgotten. I have bought as many volumes as contain about an hundred and fifty sermons, which I will put in a box, and get Mr. Mathias to send him. I shall add a letter.

"We have been lately much alarmed at Mr. Thrale's. He has had a stroke, like that of an apoplexy; but he has at last got so well as to be at Bath, out of the way of trouble and business, and is likely to be in a short time quite well. I hope all the Lichfield ladies are quite well, and that every thing is prosperous among them.

"A few weeks ago I sent you a little stuff gown, such as is all the fashion at this time. Yours is the same with Mrs. Thrale's, and Miss bought it for us. These stuffs are very cheap, and are thought very pretty.

"Pray give my compliments to Mr. Pearson, and to every body, if any such body there be, that cares about me.

"I am now engaged about the rest of the Lives, which I am afraid will take some time, though I purpose to use despatch; but something or other always hinders. I have a great number to do, but many of them will be short.

"I have lately had colds: the first was pretty bad, with a very troublesome and frequent cough; but by bleeding and physic it was sent away. I have a cold now, but not bad enough for bleeding.

"For some time past, and indeed ever since I left Lichfield last year, I have abated much of my diet, and am, I think, the better for abstinence. I can breathe and move with less difficulty; and I am as well as people of my age commonly are. I hope we shall see one another again some time this year. I am, dear love, your humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 370. TO MRS. THRALE.

"April 11. 1780.

"On Sunday I dined with poor Lawrence, who is deafer than ever. When he was told that Dr. Moisy visited Mr. Thrale, he inquired for what, and said that there was nothing to be done which Nature would not do for herself. On Sunday evening I was at Mr. Vesey's, and there was inquiry about my master; but I told them all good. There was Dr. Barnard of Eton, and we made a noise all the evening: and there was Pepys (1), and Wraxall (2) till I drove him away. .... Burney said she would write — she told you a fib. She writes nothing to me. She can write home fast enough. I have a good mind not to let her know that Dr. Barnard, to whom I had recommended her novel, speaks of it with great commendation; and that the copy which she lent me has been read by Dr. Lawrence three times over. And yet what a gipsy it is! She no more minds me than if I were a Brangton.

"You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say of men about whom I know nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of *them*. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end. Mr. Nicholls holds that Addison is the most *taking* of all that I have done. I doubt they will not be done before you come away.

"Now you think yourself the first writer in the world

(1) Afterwards Sir W. W. Pepys, a Master in Chancery; a great friend of Mrs. Thrale's, and, what is more to his honour, of Hannah More. — C.

(2) Nathaniel Wraxall, who published some volumes of travels and history, and latterly Memoirs of his own Life; for a passage in which, reflecting on Count Woronzow, he was convicted of a libel, and imprisoned in Newgate. He was born in 1751, and created a Baronet in 1813. — C.

for a letter about nothing. Can you write such a letter as this? so miscellaneous, with such noble disdain of regularity, like Shakspeare's works? such graceful negligence of transition, like the ancient enthusiasts? The pure voice of nature and of friendship. Now of whom shall I proceed to speak? Of whom but Mrs. Montagu? Having mentioned Shakspeare and Nature, does not the name of Montagu force itself upon me (1)? Such were the transitions of the ancients, which now seem abrupt because the intermediate idea is lost to modern understandings."

"April 15. 1780.

"I thought to have finished Rowe's Life to-day, but I have had five or six visiters who hindered me; and I have not been quite well. Next week I hope to despatch four or five of them."

"April 18. 1780. — You make verses, and they are read in public, and I know nothing about them. This very crime, I think, broke the link of amity between Richardson and Miss M—— (2), after a tenderness and confidence of many years."

"April 25. 1780. — How do you think I live? On Thursday I dined with Hamilton (3), and went thence to Mrs. Ord. (4) On Friday, with much com-

(1) Compare this with two former phrases, in which Shakspeare and Mrs. Montagu are mentioned (*antè*, Vol. III. p. 89. and p. 90.), and wonder at the inconsistencies to which the greatest genius and the highest spirit may be reduced! — C.

(2) Miss Mulso, afterwards Mrs. Chapone, one of Richardson's female côterie. When about three and twenty, she had been one of the few contributors to the Rambler. She was born in 1727, married Mr. Chapone in 1760, and died in 1801. She was much connected with Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Montagu, and all the *Blues*. — C.

(3) Probably the Right Hon. W. G. Hamilton. — C.

(4) This lady (a celebrated *blue stocking* of her day) was Miss Anne Dillingham, the only daughter of an eminent surgeon. She was early married to Mr. Ord, of Northumberland, who

pany, at Mrs. Reynolds's. On Saturday at Dr. Bell's. On Sunday at Dr. Burney's, with your two sweets from Kensington, who are both well: at night came Mrs. Ord, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Greville, &c. On Monday with Reynolds; at night with Lady Lucan; to-day with Mr. Langton; to-morrow with the Bishop of St. Asaph; on Thursday with Mr. Bowles; Friday ——; Saturday at the Academy (1); Sunday with Mr. Ramsay. I told Lady Lucan how long it was since she sent to me; but she said I must consider how the world rolls about her. I not only scour the town from day to day, but many visiters come to me in the morning, so that my work makes no great progress, but I will try to quicken it. I should certainly like to bustle a little among you, but I am unwilling to quit my post till I have made an end."

Mrs. Thrale being now at Bath with her husband, the correspondence between Johnson and her was carried on briskly. I shall present my readers with one of her original letters to him at this time, which will amuse them probably more than those well-written but studied epistles which she has inserted in her collection, because it exhibits the easy vivacity of their literary intercourse. It is also of value as a key to Johnson's answer, which she has printed by itself, and of which I shall subjoin extracts." (2)

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left her a very large property. She died in May, 1808, at the age of eighty-two. — C.

(1) The annual dinner on opening the Exhibition. — C.

(2) This insinuation against Mrs. Thrale is quite unfounded: her letters are certainly any thing but *studied epistles*; and that one which Mr. Boswell has published is not more easy and unaffected, nor in any respect of a different character from those she herself has given. — C.

LETTER 371. FROM MRS. THRALE.

"Bath, Friday, April 28.

"I had a very kind letter from you yesterday, dear Sir, with a most circumstantial date. (1) You took trouble with my circulating letter, Mr. Evans writes me word, and I thank you sincerely for so doing; one might do mischief else, not being on the spot.

"Yesterday's evening was passed at Mrs. Montagu's. There was Mr. Melmoth. (2) I do not like him *though*, nor he me. It was expected we should have pleased each other: he is, however, just Tory enough to hate the Bishop of Peterborough (3) for Whiggism, and Whig enough to abhor you for Toryism.

"Mrs. Montagu flattered him finely; so he had a good afternoon on't. This evening we spent at a concert. Poor Queeney's sore eyes have just released her: she had a long confinement, and could neither read nor write, so my master treated her, very good-naturedly, with the visits of a young woman in this town, a tailor's daughter, who professes music, and teaches so as to give six lessons a day to ladies, at five and threepence a lesson. Miss Burney says she is a great performer; and I respect the wench for getting her living so prettily. She is very modest and pretty-mannered, and not seventeen years old.

"You live in a fine whirl indeed. If I did not write regularly, you would half forget me, and that would be very wrong, for I *felt* my regard for you in *my face* last night, when the criticisms were going on.

(1) This alludes to Johnson's frequent advice to her and Miss Thrale to *date* their letters, a laudable habit, which, however, he himself did not always practise. — C.

(2) William Melmoth, the author of Fitzosborne's Letters, and the translator of the Letters of Pliny and Cicero, and some of the minor works of the latter. He died in 1799, ætat. 89. — C.

(3) Dr. John Hinchliffe.

"This morning it was all connoisseurship. We went to see some pictures painted by a gentleman-artist, Mr. Taylor, of this place. My master makes one every where, and has got a good dawdling companion to ride with him now. . . . . He looks well enough, but I have no notion of health for a man whose mouth cannot be sewed up. Burney and I and Queeney tease him every meal he eats, and Mrs. Montagu is quite serious with him; but what *can* one do? He will eat, I think; and if he does eat, I know he will not live. It makes me very unhappy, but I must bear it. Let me always have your friendship. I am, most sincerely, dear Sir, your faithful servant, H. L. T."

LETTER 372. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, May 1. 1780.

"DEAREST MADAM, — Mr. Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to live by rule ***.(1) Encourage, as you can, the musical girl.

"Nothing is more common than mutual dislike, where mutual approbation is particularly expected. There is often on both sides a vigilance not over-benevolent; and as attention is strongly excited, so that nothing drops unheeded, any difference in taste or opinion, and some difference where there is no restraint will commonly appear, immediately generates dislike.

"Never let criticisms operate on your face or your mind; it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his critics. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket. A very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed. From the author of 'Fitzosborne's Letters' I cannot think myself in much danger. I met him only once about thirty years ago, and in some small dispute re-

(1) I have taken the liberty to leave out a few lines.

duced him to whistle. Having not seen him since, that is the last impression. Poor Moore, the fabulist, was one of the company.

"Mrs. Montagu's long stay, against her own inclination, is very convenient. You would, by your own confession, want a companion; and she is *par pluribus*. Conversing with her you may *find variety in one*. (1)

"At Mrs. Ord's I met one Mrs. B —— (2), a travelled lady, of great spirit, and some consciousness of her own abilities. We had a contest of gallantry an hour long, so much to the diversion of the company, that, at Ramsay's, last night, in a crowded room, they would have pitted us again. There were Smelt (3) and the Bishop of St. Asaph, who comes to every place; and Lord Monboddo, and Sir Joshua, and ladies out of tale.

"The exhibition, how will you do, either to see or not to see! The exhibition is eminently splendid. There is *contour*, and *keeping*, and *grace*, and *expression*, and all the varieties of artificial excellence. The apartments were truly very noble. The pictures, for the sake of a skylight, are at the top of the house; there we dined, and I sat over against the Archbishop of York."

"May 7. 1780. — I dined on Wednesday with Mr. Fitzmaurice, who almost made me promise to pass part of the summer at Llewenny. To-morrow I dine with Mrs. Southwel; and on Thursday with Lord Lucan.

(1) Line of a song in the *Spectator*, No. 470. — C.

(2) Mrs. Buller, of whom Mrs. D'Arblay writes, "Mrs. Buller is tall and elegant in her person, genteel and ugly in her face, and abrupt and singular in her manners. She is very clever, sprightly, witty, and much in vogue — a Greek scholar and a celebrated traveller — having had the maternal heroism to accompany her son on the Grand Tour." — *Mem. of Burney*, vol. ii. p. 291. — C.

(3) Leonard Smelt, Esq., sub-governor to the sons of George III. He was much in the *blue stocking* circle of the day; he died in 1800, at an advanced age. — C.

To-night I go to Miss Monkton's. (1) Then I scramble, when you do not quite shut me up: but I am miserably under petticoat government, and yet am not very weary, nor much ashamed."

"May 8. 1780. — I dine on Thursday at Lord Lucan's, and on Saturday at Lady Craven's; and I dined yesterday with Mrs. Southwel. As to my looks at the Academy, I was not told of them; and as I remember, I was very well, and am well enough now."

"May 9. 1780. — My Lives creep on. I have done Addison, Prior, Rowe, Granville, Sheffield, Collins, Pitt, and almost Fenton. I design to take Congreve next into my hand. I hope to have done before you can come home, and then whither shall I go?—Did I tell you that Scot and Jones (2) both offer themselves to represent the University in the place of Sir Roger Newdigate? They are struggling hard for what others think neither of them will obtain."

On the 2d of May I wrote to him, and requested that we might have another meeting somewhere in the north of England in the autumn of this year.

From Mr. Langton I received soon after this time a letter, of which I extract a passage, relative both to Mr. Beauclerk and Dr. Johnson.

(1) The Hon. Mary Monkton, daughter of the first Viscount Galway, born April 1747; married in 1786 to Edmund, seventh Earl of Corke and Orrery. Lodge's Irish Peerage dates her birth 1737, but this is a mistake for an elder sister of the same name. Now in her *eighty-ninth* year, Lady Corke still entertains and enjoys society with extraordinary health, spirits, and vivacity, and Boswell's description of her *fifty-four years ago*, as "the lively Miss Monkton, who used always to have the finest *bit of blue* at her parties," is characteristic to this day. — C. 1835.

(2) Lord Stowell and Sir William Jones. On this occasion Sir W. Dolben was chosen, but Lord Stowell was elected for the University of Oxford in 1801, and represented it till his promotion to the peerage in 1821. — C.

"The melancholy information you have received concerning Mr. Beauclerk's death is true. Had his talents been directed in any sufficient degree as they ought, I have always been strongly of opinion that they were calculated to make an illustrious figure; and that opinion, as it had been in part formed upon Dr. Johnson's judgment, receives more and more confirmation by hearing what, since his death, Dr. Johnson has said concerning them. A few evenings ago he was at Mr. Vesey's, where Lord Althorpe (1), who was one of a numerous company there, addressed Dr. Johnson on the subject of Mr. Beauclerk's death, saying, 'Our Club has had a great loss since we met last.' He replied, 'A loss that perhaps the whole nation could not repair!' The doctor then went on to speak of his endowments, and particularly extolled the wonderful ease with which he uttered what was highly excellent. He said, 'that no man ever was so free, when he was going to say a good thing, from a *look* that expressed that it was coming; or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come.' At Mr. Thrale's, some days before, when we were talking on the same subject, he said, referring to the same idea of his wonderful facility, 'That Beauclerk's talents were those which he had felt himself more disposed to envy, than those of any whom he had known.'

"On the evening I have spoken of above, at Mr. Vesey's, you would have been much gratified, as it exhibited an instance of the high importance in which Dr. Johnson's character is held, I think even beyond any I ever before was witness to. The company consisted chiefly of ladies; among whom were the Duchess

(1) John George, second Earl Spencer, who has been so kind as to answer some of my inquiries relative to the *society*, of which he and Lord Stowell are now almost the only survivors. — C. — He died November 10. 1834 — the possessor of one of the choicest private libraries in the world. — C. 1835.

Dowager of Portland (1), the Duchess of Beaufort, whom, I suppose, from her rank, I must name before her mother, Mrs. Boscawen (2), and her eldest sister, Mrs. Lewson, who was likewise there; Lady Lucan (3), Lady Clermont (4), and others of note both for their station and understandings. Among other gentlemen were Lord Althorpe, whom I have before named, Lord Macartney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr. Wraxal, whose book you have probably seen, the 'Tour to the Northern Parts of Europe,' a very agreeable, ingenious man, Dr. Warren, Mr. Pepys, the master in chancery, whom, I believe, you know, and Dr. Barnard, the provost of Eton. (5) As soon as Dr.

(1) Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, only child of the second Earl of Oxford and Mortimer; married in 1734 to the second Duke of Portland. She was the heiress of three great families: herself of the Harleys; her mother (the Lady Harriet of Prior) was the heiress of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle; and *her* mother again, the heiress of Henry Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle. "The Duchess of Portland inherited," says the Peerage, "the spirit of her ancestors in her patronage of literature and the arts." Her birth was congratulated by Swift, and her childhood celebrated by Prior in the well-known nursery lines beginning

"My noble, lovely, little Peggy."

The duchess died in 1785. — C.

(2) See *antè*, p. 186. Mrs. Boscawen and her daughters, Mrs. Leveson (spelled in the text, as it is pronounced, *Lewson*) Gower and the Duchess of Beaufort, are celebrated in Miss Hannah More's poem entitled "Sensibility," who, speaking of Mrs. Boscawen, says that she

"—— views, enamoured, in her beauteous race,
All Leveson's sweetness and all Beaufort's grace."— C.

(3) Margaret Smith; married in 1760 the first Lord Lucan. — C.

(4) Frances Murray; married in 1752 to the first Lord Clermont. — C.

(5) See *antè*, p. 314., Johnson's own account of this evening. The gentle and good-natured Langton does not hint at his having *driven away* "the *very agreeable and ingenious* Mr. Wraxal."

Johnson was come in, and *had taken the chair*, the company began to collect round him till they became not less than four, if not five deep; those behind standing, and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr. Johnson and the provost of Eton, while the others contributed occasionally their remarks. Without attempting to detail the particulars of the conversation, which, perhaps, if I did, I should spin my account out to a tedious length, I thought, my dear Sir, this general account of the respect with which our valued friend was attended to might be acceptable."

LETTER 373. TO MR. THOMAS WARTON.(1)

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, May 9. 1780.

"SIR, — I have your pardon to ask for an involuntary fault. In a parcel sent from Mr. Boswell I found the enclosed letter, which, without looking on the direction, I broke open; but, finding I did not understand it, soon saw it belonged to you. I am sorry for this appearance of a fault, but believe me it is only the

(1) The formal style of this letter, compared with that of his former correspondence with Mr. Thomas Warton, plainly proves that a coolness or misunderstanding had taken place between them. In Dr. Wooll's Memoirs of Dr. Warton we find the following statement: "The disagreement which took place after a long and warm friendship between Johnson and [Joseph] Warton is much to be lamented. It occurred at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, as I am told by one of the company, who only overheard the following conclusion of the dispute: JOHNSON. 'Sir, I am not used to be contradicted.' WARTON. 'Better for yourself and friends, Sir, if you were: our admiration could not be increased, but our love might.' The party interfered, and the conversation was stopped. A coolness, however, from that time took place, and was increased by many trifling circumstances, which, before this dispute, would, perhaps, have not been attended to." The style, however, of the second letter to Dr. Warton, written so late in Dr. Johnson's life, leads us to hope that the difference recorded by Dr. Wooll was transient. — C.

appearance. I did not read enough of the letter to know its purport. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 374. TO DR. WARTON.

"May 23. 1780.

"DEAR SIR, — It is unnecessary to tell you how much I was obliged by your useful memorials. The shares of Fenton and Broome in the Odyssey I had before from Mr. Spence. Dr. Warburton did not know them. I wish to be told, as the question is of great importance in the poetical world, whence you had your intelligence: if from Spence, it shows at least his consistency; if from any other, it confers corroboration. If any thing useful to me should occur, I depend upon your friendship. Be pleased to make my compliments to the ladies of your house, and to the gentlemen that honoured me with the Greek Epigrams, when I had, what I hope sometime to have again, the pleasure of spending a little time with you at Winchester. I am, dear Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 375. TO MRS. THRALE.

"May 23. 1780.

"But [Mrs. Montagu] and you have had, with all your adulation, nothing finer said of you than was said last Saturday night of Burke and me. We were at the Bishop of —— —— (1) (a bishop little better than *your* bishop), and towards twelve we fell into talk, to which the ladies listened, just as they do to you; and said, as I heard, '*there is no rising unless somebody will cry Fire!*' I was last night at Miss Monkton's; and there were Lady Craven and Lady Cranburne, and

(1) The Bishop of St. Asaph's, of whose too constant appearance in general society Dr. Johnson disapproved. — C.



many ladies and few men. Next Saturday I am to be at Mr. Pepys's, and in the intermediate time am to provide for myself as I can."

"May 25.—*Congreve*, whom I despatched at the Borough while I was attending the election, is one of the best of the little *Lives*; but then I had your conversation."

LETTER 376. TO THE REV. DR. FARMER.

"May 25. 1780.

"SIR,—I know your disposition to second any literary attempt, and therefore venture upon the liberty of intreating you to procure from college or university registers all the dates or other informations which they can supply relating to Ambrose Philips, Broome, and Gray, who were all of Cambridge, and of whose lives I am to give such accounts as I can gather. Be pleased to forgive this trouble from, Sir, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

While Johnson was thus engaged in preparing a delightful literary entertainment for the world, the tranquillity of the metropolis of Great Britain was unexpectedly disturbed by the most horrid series of outrage that ever disgraced a civilised country. A relaxation of some of the severe penal provisions against our fellow-subjects of the Catholic communion had been granted by the legislature, with an opposition so inconsiderable, that the genuine mildness of Christianity, united with liberal policy, seemed to have become general in this island. But a dark and malignant spirit of persecution soon showed itself, in an unworthy petition for the repeal of the wise and humane statute. That petition was brought forward by a mob, with the evident pur-

pose of intimidation, and was justly rejected. But the attempt was accompanied and followed by such daring violence as is unexampled in history. Of this extraordinary tumult, Dr. Johnson has given the following concise, lively, and just account in his "Letters to Mrs. Thrale" (1):—

"June 9. 1780. — On Friday, the good protestants met in Saint George's Fields, at the summons of Lord George Gordon; and marching to Westminster, insulted the lords and commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln's Inn.

"An exact journal of a week's defiance of government I cannot give you. On Monday Mr. Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to Lord Mansfield, who had I think been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace; and his lordship treated it as a very slight irregularity. On Tuesday night they pulled down Fielding's house and burnt his goods in the street. They had gutted on Monday Sir George Savile's house, but the building was saved. On Tuesday evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate to demand their companions, who had been seized demolishing the chapel. The keeper could not release them but by the mayor's permission, which he went to ask: at his return he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze. They then went to Bloomsbury, and fastened upon Lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down; and as for his goods, they totally burnt them. They have since gone to Caen-wood, but a guard was there before them. They plundered some papists, I think, and burnt a mass-house, in Moorfields, the same night.

(1) Vol. II. p. 143. *et seq.* I have selected passages from several letters, without mentioning dates. — B. — I have restored the dates and a remarkable omission. — C.

"On Wednesday I walked with Dr. Scot, to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the protestants were plundering the sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security without sentinels, without trepidation as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood-street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners.

"At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's Bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. Some people were threatened: Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing.

"The king said in council, 'that the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own;' and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force. The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet.

"What has happened at your house you will know; the harm is only a few butts of beer; and, I think, you may be sure that the danger is over. There is a body of soldiers at St. Margaret's Hill."

"June 10.—The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call. There is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are hunted to their holes, and led to prison. Lord George was last night sent to the Tower. Mr. John Wilkes was this day in my neighbourhood, to seize the publisher of a seditious paper.

"Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive papists have been plundered; but the high sport was to burn the gaols. This was a good rabble

trick. The debtors and the criminals were all set at liberty; but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already retaken; and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned.

"Government now acts again with its proper force; and we are all under the protection of the king and the law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my *master* to have my testimony to the public security; and that you would sleep more quietly when I told you that you are safe."

"June 12.—The public has escaped a very heavy calamity. The rioters attempted the Bank on Wednesday night, but in no great number; and like other thieves, with no great resolution. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away. It is agreed, that if they had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panic, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found. Jack, who was always zealous for order and decency (1), declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive. There is however, now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed; no blue riband (2) is any longer worn.

"All danger here is apparently over: but a little agitation still continues. We frighten one another with 70,000 Scots (3) to come hither with the Dukes

(1) At this ironical allusion to Mr. Wilkes's own proceedings in former times, he would have been the first to smile. To a gentleman who, at a still later period, was alluding to the turbulent days of *Wilkes and Liberty*, and appealed for confirmation of some opinion to Mr. Wilkes, the latter, with a serious pleasantry, replied, "My dear Sir, I never was a *Wilkite*." — C.

(2) Lord George Gordon and his followers, during these outrages, wore blue ribands in their hats. — M.

(3) Mr. Boswell seems not to have relished this allusion to a Scottish invasion, and instead of laughing, as Johnson appears to have done, at this absurd rumour, chose to omit the passage altogether. — C.

of Gordon and Argyll, and eat us, and hang us, or drown us; but we are all at quiet."

"June 14.—There has, indeed, been an universal panic, from which the king was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers, or the assistance of the civil magistrates, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities, such as a rabble's government must naturally produce."

Such was the end of this miserable sedition, from which London was delivered by the magnanimity of the sovereign himself. Whatever some may maintain, I am satisfied that there was no combination or plan, either domestic or foreign; but that the mischief spread by a gradual contagion of frenzy, augmented by the quantities of fermented liquors of which the deluded populace possessed themselves in the course of their depredations.

I should think myself very much to blame, did I here neglect to do justice to my esteemed friend (1) Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, who long discharged a very important trust with an uniform intrepid firmness, and at the same time a tenderness and a liberal charity which entitle him to be recorded with distinguished honour.

Upon this occasion, from the timidity and negligence of magistracy on the one hand, and the almost incredible exertions of the mob on the other,

(1) Why Mr. Boswell should call the keeper of Newgate his "*esteemed friend*" has puzzled many readers; but besides his natural desire to make the acquaintance of every body who was eminent or remarkable, or even notorious, his strange propensity for witnessing executions probably brought him into more immediate intercourse with the keeper of Newgate.—C.

the first prison of this great country was laid open, and the prisoners set free; but that Mr. Akerman, whose house was burnt, would have prevented all this, had proper aid been sent him in due time, there can be no doubt.

Many years ago, a fire broke out in the brick part which was built as an addition to the old gaol of Newgate. The prisoners were in consternation and tumult, calling out, "We shall be burnt, we shall be burnt! Down with the gate! — down with the gate!" Mr. Akerman hastened to them, showed himself at the gate, and having, after some confused vociferation of "Hear him! hear him!" obtained a silent attention, he then calmly told them, that the gate must not go down; that they were under his care, and that they should not be permitted to escape; but that he could assure them they need not be afraid of being burnt, for that the fire was not in the prison, properly so called, which was strongly built with stone; and that if they would engage to be quiet, he himself would come in to them, and conduct them to the further end of the building, and would not go out till they gave him leave. To this proposal they agreed; upon which Mr. Akerman, having first made them fall back from the gate, went in, and with a determined resolution ordered the outer turnkey upon no account to open the gate, even though the prisoners (though he trusted they would not) should break their word and by force bring himself to order it. "Never mind me," said he, "should that happen." The prisoners peaceably followed him, while he con-

ducted them through passages of which he had the keys to the extremity of the gaol, which was most distant from the fire. Having by this very judicious conduct fully satisfied them that there was no immediate risk, if any at all, he then addressed them thus: "Gentlemen, you are now convinced that I told you true. I have no doubt that the engines will soon extinguish this fire: if they should not, a sufficient guard will come, and you shall be all taken out and lodged in the compters. I assure you, upon my word and honour, that I have not a farthing insured. I have left my house that I might take care of you. I will keep my promise, and stay with you if you insist upon it; but if you will allow me to go out and look after my family and property, I shall be obliged to you." Struck with his behaviour, they called out, "Master Akerman, you have done bravely; it was very kind in you: by all means go and take care of your own concerns." He did so accordingly, while they remained, and were all preserved.

Johnson has been heard to relate the substance of this story with high praise, in which he was joined by Mr. Burke. My illustrious friend, speaking of Mr. Akerman's kindness to his prisoners, pronounced this eulogy upon his character: — "He who has long had constantly in his view the worst of mankind, and is yet eminent for the humanity of his disposition, must have had it originally in a great degree, and continued to cultivate it very carefully."

LETTER 377. TO MRS. THRALE.

"June 15. 1780.

"I was last week at *Renny's conversatione*, and *Renny* got her room pretty well filled; and there were Mrs. Ord, and Mrs. Horneck, and Mrs. Bunbury, and other illustrious names, and much would poor *Renny* have given to have had Mrs. Thrale too, and Queeny, and Burney; but human happiness is never perfect; there is always *une vuide affreuse*, as Maintenon complained, there is some craving void left aking in the breast. *Renny* is going to Ramsgate; and thus the world drops away, and I am left in the sultry town, to see the sun in the *Crab*, and perhaps in the *Lion*, while you are paddling with the Nereids."

"July 4.—I have not seen or done much since I had the misfortune of seeing you go away. I was one night at Burney's. There were Pepys, and Mrs. Ord, and Paradise, and Hoole, and Dr. Dunbar of Aberdeen, and I know not how many more; and Pepys and I had all the talk."

LETTER 378. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"Bolt Court, June 16. 1780.

"DEAR MADAM,—I answer your letter as soon as I can, for I have just received it. I am very willing to wait on you at all times, and will sit for the picture, and, if it be necessary, will sit again, for whenever I sit I shall be always with you.

"Do not, my love, burn your papers. I have mended little but some bad rhymes. (1) I thought them very pretty, and was much moved in reading them. The red ink is only lake and gum, and with a moist sponge will be washed off.

(1) Of a poem now (by the favour of Mr. Palmer) before me. Johnson read it attentively, and made numerous corrections, but after all it is not worth much. — C.

"I have been out of order, but by bleeding and other means, am now better. Let me know on which day I shall come to you. I am, &c. SAM. JOHNSON.

"To-day I am engaged, and only to-day."

LETTER 379. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, July 10. 1780.

"Last week I saw flesh but twice, and I think fish once: the rest was pease. You are afraid, you say, lest I extenuate myself too fast, and are an enemy to violence: but did you never hear nor read, dear madam, that every man has his *genius*; and that the great rule by which all excellence is attained, and all success procured, is to follow *genius*; and have you not observed in all our conversation that my *genius* is always in extremes — that I am very noisy or very silent, very gloomy or very merry, very sour or very kind? And would you have me cross my *genius*, when it leads me sometimes to voracity, and sometimes to abstinence? You know that the oracle said, Follow your *genius*. When we get together again (but when, alas! will that be?) you can manage me, and spare me the solicitude of managing myself.

"I stay at home to work, and yet do not work diligently; nor can tell when I shall have done, nor perhaps does any body but myself wish me to have done; for what can they hope I shall do better? Yet I wish the work was over, and I was at liberty. Would I go to Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Porter, and see the old places, and sigh to find that my old friends are gone? Would I recal plans of life which I never brought into practice, and hopes of excellence which I once presumed, and never have attained? Would I compare what I now am, with what I once expected to have been? Is it reasonable to wish for suggestions of shame, and opportunities of sorrow?"

"July 27. — I dined yesterday at Sir Joshua's with Mrs. Cholmondeley, and she told me I was the best critic in the world, and I told her that nobody in the world could judge like her of the merit of a critic. On Sunday I was with Dr Lawrence and his two sisters-in-law, to dine with Mr. G——, at Putney. The doctor cannot hear in a coach better than in a room, and it was but a dull day."

"August 1. — I sent to Lord Westcote (1) about his brother's Life; but he says he knows not whom to employ, and is sure I shall do him no injury. There is an ingenious scheme to save a day's work, or part of a day, utterly defeated. Then what avails it to be wise? The plain and the artful man must both do their own work. But I think I have got a Life of Dr. Young." (2)

In the course of this month my brother David (3) waited upon Dr. Johnson, with the following letter of introduction, which I had taken care should be lying ready on his arrival in London.

LETTER 380. TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, April 29, 1780.

"MY DEAR SIR, — This will be delivered to you by my brother David on his return from Spain. You will be glad to see the man who vowed to 'stand by the old

(1) Brother to the first Lord Lyttelton, by which title he was afterwards himself created an English peer. See ante, Vol. V. p. 214. — C.

(2) From Mr. (afterwards Sir) Herbert Croft. He died at Paris, April 27, 1816. — C.

(3) Now settled in London. — B. — As Inspector of Seamen's Wills in the Navy Pay Office; from which situation he retired in 1823, and died in 1826. — C.

castle of Auchinleck with heart, purse, and sword;' that romantic family solemnity devised by me, of which you and I talked with complacency upon the spot. I trust that twelve years of absence have not lessened his feudal attachment, and that you will find him worthy of being introduced to your acquaintance. I have the honour to be, with affectionate veneration, my dear Sir, your most faithful humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

Johnson received him very politely, and has thus mentioned him in a letter to Mrs. Thrale(1): —

"I have had with me a brother of Boswell's, a Spanish merchant, whom the war has driven from his residence at Valencia. He is gone to see his friends, and will find Scotland but a sorry place after twelve years' residence in a happier climate. He is a very agreeable man, and speaks no Scotch." (2)

LETTER 381. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Aug 14. 1780

"I hope you have no design of stealing away to Italy before the election, nor of leaving me behind you; though I am not only *seventy* but *seventy-one*. Could not you let me lose a year in round numbers? Sweetly, sweetly, sings Dr. Swift, —

'Some dire misfortune to portend,
No enemy can match a friend.'

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(1) Mrs. Piozzi has omitted the name, *she best knows why.*

(2) Dr. Johnson had, for the last year, felt some alleviation of a troublesome disease which had long affected him; this relief he thus gratefully and devoutly acknowledged — "Sunday, June 18. — In the morning of this day last year, I perceived the remission of those convulsions in my breast which had distressed me for more than twenty years. I returned thanks at church for the mercy granted me, which has now continued a year." *Pr. and Med.* p. 180. — C.

But what if I am *seventy-two*? I remember Sulpitius says of Saint Martin — (now that's above *your* reading) — *Est animus victor annorum, et senectuti cedere nescius*. Match me that among your own folks. If you try to plague me, I shall tell you that, according to Galen, life begins to decline from *thirty-five*." (1)

LETTER 382. TO DR. BEATTIE,

At Aberdeen.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Aug. 21. 1780.

"SIR, — More years (2) than I have any delight to reckon have past since you and I saw one another: of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint: — *Sic fata ferunt*. But methinks there might pass some small interchange of regard between us. If you say that I ought to have written, I now write: and I write to tell you, that I have much kindness for you and Mrs. Beattie; and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees southwards. A softer climate may do you both good. Winter is coming in; and London will be warmer, and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen.

"My health is better, but that will be little in the balance when I tell you that Mrs. Montagu has been very ill, and is, I doubt, now but weakly. Mr. Thrale has been very dangerously disordered; but is much better, and I hope will totally recover. He has withdrawn himself from business the whole summer. Sir Joshua and his sister are well; and Mr. Davies has got

(1) Mrs. Piozzi at her last birth-day must have been thirty-nine; and as she had known Dr. Johnson since she was twenty-four or twenty-five, he could hardly so much mistake her years. Yet certainly the point of this pleasantry seems somewhat blunted by its not exactly fitting the lady's age. — C.

(2) I had been five years absent from London. — BEATTIE.

great success as an author (1), generated by the corruption of a bookseller. (2) More news I have not to tell you, and therefore you must be contented with hearing, what I know not whether you much wish to hear (3), that I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 388. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Aug. 21. 1780.

"DEAR SIR, — I find you have taken one of your fits of taciturnity, and have resolved not to write till you are written to: it is but a peevish humour, but you shall have your way.

"I have sat at home in Bolt Court all the summer, thinking to write the *Lives*, and a great part of the time

(1) Meaning his entertaining "Memoirs of David Garrick, Esq." of which Johnson (as Davies informed me) wrote the first sentence; thus giving, as it were, the key-note to the performance. It is, indeed, very characteristical of its author; beginning with a maxim, and proceeding to illustrate. "All excellence has a right to be recorded. I shall, therefore, think it superfluous to apologise for writing the life of a man, who, by an uncommon assemblage of private virtues, adorned the highest eminence in a public profession."

(2) What the expression "generated by the corruption of a bookseller" means, seems not quite clear; perhaps it is an allusion to the generation of a class of insects, as if Davies, from his adversity as a bookseller, had burst into new and gaudier life as an author. — C. — [The service which this figure has performed is multifarious. It alludes evidently to the dogma of the physiologists, "Corruptio unius est generatio alterius" Dryden makes use of it in his letters; and in Congreve's Remarks on Collier, I find, "The corruption of a rotten divine is the generation of a sour critic." But the allusion is to be found still earlier in the first of Quevedo's Visions — "The corruption of mankind is the generation of a catchpole;" — where the word "corruption" has an appropriate application (figuratively at least), which I presume is what Mr. Croker sought in vain in Johnson's use of it. — FONNEREAU.]

(3) I wish he had omitted the suspicion expressed here, though I believe he meant nothing but jocularity; for, though he and I differed sometimes in opinion, he well knew how much I loved and revered him. — BEATTIE.

only thinking. Several of them, however, are done, and I still think to do the rest.

"Mr. Thrale and his family have, since his illness, passed their time first at Bath, and then at Brighthelmstone; but I have been at neither place. I would have gone to Lichfield if I could have had time, and I might have had time if I had been active; but I have missed much, and done little.

"In the late disturbances, Mr. Thrale's house and stock were in great danger. The mob was pacified at their first invasion with about fifty pounds in drink and meat; and at their second, were driven away by the soldiers. Mr. Strahan got a garrison into his house, and maintained them a fortnight: he was so frighted, that he removed part of his goods. Mrs. Williams took shelter in the country.

"I know not whether I shall get a ramble this autumn. It is now about the time when we were travelling. I have, however, better health than I had then, and hope you and I may yet show ourselves on some part of Europe, Asia, or Africa.(1) In the mean-time let us play no trick, but keep each other's kindness by all means in our power.

"The bearer of this is Dr. Dunbar of Aberdeen, who has written and published a very ingenious book (2),

(1) It will no doubt be remarked how he avoids the *rebellious* land of America. This puts me in mind of an anecdote, for which I am obliged to my worthy, social friend, Governor Richard Penn. "At one of Miss E. Hervey's assemblies, Dr. Johnson was following her up and down the room; upon which Lord Abingdon observed to her, 'Your great friend is very fond of you; you can go nowhere without him.' 'Ay,' said she, 'he would follow me to any part of the world.' 'Then,' said the Earl, 'ask him to go with you *to America*.'" — B. — This lady was Miss Elizabeth Hervey, daughter of William, brother of Johnson's two friends, Thomas and Henry Hervey. She was born in 1730, and died at a very advanced age, unmarried. — C.

(2) "Essays on the History of Mankind." — [See some account of this professor in the first volume of the Memoirs of his pupil, Sir James Mackintosh, 1835.]

and who I think has a kindness for me and will, when he knows you, have a kindness for you.

"I suppose your little ladies are grown tall; and your son has become a learned young man. I love them all, and I love your naughty lady, whom I never shall persuade to love me. When the *Lives* are done, I shall send them to complete her collection, but must send them in paper, as, for want of a pattern, I cannot bind them to fit the rest. I am, Sir, yours most affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 384. TO MRS. THRALE.

"London, Aug. 25. 1780.

"I have not dined out for some time but with *Renny*, or Sir Joshua; and next week Sir Joshua goes to Devonshire, and *Renny* to Richmond, and I am left by myself. I wish I could say *nunquam minus* (1), &c., but I am not diligent. I am afraid that I shall not see Lichfield this year, yet it would please me to show my friends how much better I am grown: but I am not grown, I am afraid, less idle; and of idleness I am now paying the fine by having no leisure."

This year he wrote to a young clergyman (2) in the country the following very excellent letter, which contains valuable advice to divines in general: —

LETTER 385. TO A YOUNG CLERGYMAN.

"Bolt Court, Aug. 30. 1780.

"DEAR SIR, — Not many days ago Dr. Lawrence showed me a letter, in which you make mention of me

(1) "Never less alone than when alone." — C.

(2) Probably his friend, the Reverend George Strahan, who published his Prayers and Meditations. — C.

I hope, therefore, you will not be displeased that I endeavour to preserve your goodwill by some observations which your letter suggested to me.

"You are afraid of falling into some improprieties in the daily service by reading to an audience that requires no exactness. Your fear, I hope, secures you from danger. They who contract absurd habits are such as have no fear. It is impossible to do the same thing very often without some peculiarity of manner: but that manner may be good or bad, and a little care will at least preserve it from being bad: to make it good, there must, I think, be something of natural or casual felicity, which cannot be taught.

"Your present method of making your sermons seems very judicious. Few frequent preachers can be supposed to have sermons more their own than yours will be. Take care to register, somewhere or other, the authors from whom your several discourses are borrowed; and do not imagine that you shall always remember, even what, perhaps, you now think it impossible to forget.

"My advice, however, is, that you attempt, from time to time, an original sermon; and, in the labour of composition, do not burden your mind with too much at once; do not exact from yourself at one effort of excogitation, propriety of thought and elegance of expression. Invent first, and then embellish. The production of something, where nothing was before, is an act of greater energy than the expansion or decoration of the thing produced. Set down diligently your thoughts as they rise in the first words that occur; and when you have matter you will easily give it form; nor, perhaps, will this method be always necessary; for, by habit, your thoughts and diction will flow together.

"The composition of sermons is not very difficult: the divisions not only help the memory of the hearer,

but direct the judgment of the writer: they supply sources of invention, and keep every part in its proper place.

"What I like least in your letter is your account of the manners of your parish; from which I gather, that it has been long neglected by the parson. The Dean of Carlisle (Dr. Percy), who was then a little rector in Northamptonshire, told me, that it might be discerned whether or no there was a clergyman resident in a parish, by the civil or savage manner of the people. Such a congregation as yours stands in need of much reformation; and I would not have you think it impossible to reform them. A very savage parish was civilised by a decayed gentlewoman, who came among them to teach a petty school. My learned friend, Dr. Wheeler, of Oxford, when he was a young man, had the care of a neighbouring parish for fifteen pounds a year, which he was never paid; but he counted it a convenience, that it compelled him to make a sermon weekly. One woman he could not bring to the communion; and when he reproved or exhorted her, she only answered, that she was no scholar. He was advised to set some good woman or man of the parish, a little wiser than herself, to talk to her in a language level to her mind. Such honest, I may call them holy, artifices must be practised by every clergyman; for all means must be tried by which souls may be saved. Talk to your people, however, as much as you can; and you will find, that the more frequently you converse with them upon religious subjects, the more willingly they will attend, and the more submissively they will learn. A clergyman's diligence always makes him venerable. I think I have now only to say, that, in the momentous work you have undertaken, I pray God to bless you. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

My next letters to him were dated 24th August, 6th September, and 1st October, and from them I extract the following passages: —

"My brother David and I find the long-indulged fancy of our comfortable meeting again at Auchinleck so well realised, that it in some degree confirms the pleasing hope of *O! preclarum diem!* in a future state.

"I beg that you may never again harbour a suspicion of my indulging a peevish humour, or playing tricks; you will recollect that when I confessed to you that I had once been intentionally silent to try your regard, I gave you my word and honour that I would not do so again.

"I rejoice to hear of your good state of health; I pray God to continue it long. I have often said that I would willingly have ten years added to my life, to have ten taken from yours; I mean, that I would be ten years older to have you ten years younger. But let me be thankful for the years during which I have enjoyed your friendship, and please myself with the hopes of enjoying it many years to come in this state of being, trusting always, that in another state, we shall meet never to be separated. Of this we can form no notion; but the thought, though indistinct, is delightful, when the mind is calm and clear.

"The riots in London were certainly horrible; but you give me no account of your own situation during the barbarous anarchy. A description of it by Dr. Johnson would be a great painting (1); you might write another 'London, a Poem.'

"I am charmed with your condescending affectionate expression, 'let us keep each other's kindness by all the means in our power;' my revered friend! how elevating is it to my mind, that I am found worthy to be a com-

(1) I had not seen his letters to Mrs. Thrale.

panion to Dr. Samuel Johnson! All that you have said in grateful praise of Mr. Walmsley, I have long thought of you; but we are both Tories, which has a very general influence upon our sentiments. I hope that you will agree to meet me at York, about the end of this month; or if you will come to Carlisle, that would be better still, in case the dean be there. Please to consider, that to keep each other's kindness, we should every year have that free and intimate communication of mind which can be had only when we are together. We should have both our solemn and our pleasant talk.

"I write now for the third time, to tell you that my desire for our meeting this autumn is much increased. I wrote to 'Squire Godfrey Bosville, my Yorkshire *chief*, that I should, perhaps, pay him a visit, as I was to hold a conference with Dr. Johnson at York. I give you my word and honour that I said not a word of his inviting you; but he wrote to me as follows:—

"'I need not tell you I shall be happy to see you here the latter end of this month, as you propose; and I shall likewise be in hopes that you will persuade Dr. Johnson to finish the conference here. It will add to the favour of your own company, if you prevail upon such an associate to assist your observations. I have often been entertained with his writings, and I once belonged to a club of which he was a member, and I never spent an evening there, but I heard something from him well worth remembering.'

"We have thus, my dear Sir, good comfortable quarters in the neighbourhood of York, where you may be assured we shall be heartily welcome. I pray you then resolve to set out; and let not the year 1780 be a blank in our social calendar, and in that record of wisdom and wit, which I keep with so much diligence, to your honour, and the instruction and delight of others."

Mr. Thrale had now another contest for the re-

presentation in parliament of the borough of Southwark, and Johnson kindly lent him his assistance, by writing advertisements and letters for him. I shall insert one as a specimen (1): —

"TO THE WORTHY ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK.

"Southwark, Sept. 5 1780.

"GENTLEMEN, — A new parliament being now called, I again solicit the honour of being elected for one of your representatives; and solicit it with the greater confidence, as I am not conscious of having neglected my duty, or of having acted otherwise than as becomes the independent representative of independent constituents; superior to fear, Hope, and expectation, who has no private purposes to promote, and whose prosperity is involved in the prosperity of his country. As my recovery from a very severe distemper is not yet perfect, I have declined to attend the hall, and hope an omission so necessary will not be harshly censured.

(1) Mrs. Piozzi exhibits Dr. Johnson in a new and unexpected character, as taking a personal part in one of Mr. Thrale's contests for the borough. "Dr. Johnson," she says, "knew how to be merry with mean people, as well as to be sad with them; he loved the lower ranks of humanity with a real affection; and though his talents and learning kept him always in the sphere of upper life, yet he never lost sight of the time when he and they shared pain and pleasure in common. A *Borough* election once showed me his toleration of boisterous mirth, and his content in the company of people whom one would have thought at first sight little calculated for his society. A rough fellow one day on such an occasion, a hatter by trade, seeing Dr. Johnson's beaver in a state of decay, seized it suddenly with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the other: 'Ah, Master Johnson,' says he, 'this is no time to be thinking about hats.' 'No, no, Sir,' replies our Doctor in a cheerful tone, 'hats are of no use now, as you say, except to throw up in the air and huzza with;' accompanying his words with the true election halloo." — C.

"I can only send my respectful wishes, that all your deliberations may tend to the happiness of the kingdom, and the peace of the borough. I am, Gentlemen, your most faithful and obedient servant,

"HENRY THRALE."

LETTER 386. TO THE RIGHT HON. LADY SOUTHWELL (1), DUBLIN.

"Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Sept. 9. 1780.

"MADAM, — Among the numerous addresses of condolence which your great loss must have occasioned, be pleased to receive this from one whose name perhaps you have never heard, and to whom your ladyship is known only by the reputation of your virtue, and to whom your lord was known only by his kindness and beneficence.

"Your ladyship is now again summoned to exert that piety of which you once gave, in a state of pain and danger, so illustrious an example; and your lord's beneficence may be still continued by those, who with his fortune inherit his virtues.

(1) Margaret, the second daughter, and one of the co-heiresses of Arthur Cecil Hamilton, Esq. She was married in 1741 to Thomas George, the third Baron, and first Viscount, Southwell, and lived with him in the most perfect connubial felicity, till September 1780, when Lord Southwell died; a loss which she never ceased to lament to the hour of her own dissolution, in her eighty-first year, August 16. 1802. The "illustrious example of piety and fortitude" to which Dr. Johnson alludes, was the submitting, when past her fiftieth year, to an extremely painful surgical operation, which she endured with extraordinary firmness and composure, not allowing herself to be tied to her chair, nor uttering a single moan. This slight tribute of affection to the memory of these two most amiable and excellent persons, who were not less distinguished by their piety, beneficence, and unbounded charity, than by a suavity of manners which endeared them to all who knew them, it is hoped, will be forgiven from one who was honoured by their kindness and friendship from his childhood. — M.

"I hope to be forgiven the liberty which I shall take of informing your ladyship, that Mr. Mauritius Lowe, a son of your late lord's father(1), had, by recommendation to your lord, a quarterly allowance of ten pounds, the last of which, due July 26., he has not received: he was in hourly hope of his remittance, and flattered himself that on October 26., he should have received the whole half-year's bounty, when he was struck with the dreadful news of his benefactor's death.

"May I presume to hope, that his want, his relation, and his merit, which excited his lordship's charity, will continue to have the same effect upon those whom he has left behind; and that, though he has lost one friend, he may not yet be destitute. Your ladyship's charity cannot easily be exerted where it is wanted more; and to a mind like yours, distress is a sufficient recommendation. I hope to be allowed the honour of being, Madam, &c. SAM. JOHNSON." (2)

On his birthday, Johnson has this note: — "I am now beginning the seventy-second year of my

(1) Thomas, the second Lord Southwell, who was born Jan. 7. 1698-9, and died in London, Nov. 18. 1766. Johnson was well acquainted with this nobleman, and said, "he was the highest bred man, without insolence, that he was ever in company with." His younger brother, Edmund Southwell, lived in intimacy with Johnson for many years. — C.

(2) Amongst Mr. Lowe's papers was found, in Dr. Johnson's handwriting, the following draft of a letter which, no doubt, Johnson had sketched for his poor friend, and which was probably addressed to the new Lord Southwell. It has been communicated to me by Mr. Markland: —

"MY LORD, — The allowance which you are pleased to make me, I received on the ———— by Mr. Puget. Of the joy which it brought your lordship cannot judge, because you cannot imagine my distress. It was long since I had known a morning without solicitude for noon, or lain down at night without foreseeing, with terror, the distresses of the morning. My debts were small, but many; my creditors were poor, and therefore troublesome. Of this misery your lordship's bounty has given me an intermission. May your lordship live long to do much good, and to do for many what you have done for, my lord, your lordship's, &c.

"M. LOWE." — C.

life, with more strength of body and greater vigour of mind than I think is common at that age." But still he complains of sleepless nights and idle days, and forgetfulness, or neglect of resolutions. He thus pathetically expresses himself: — "Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation." (Pr. & Med., p. 185.)

Mr. Macbean, whom I have mentioned more than once, as one of Johnson's humble friends, a deserving but unfortunate man, being now oppressed by age and poverty, Johnson solicited the Lord Chancellor Thurlow to have him admitted into the Charter-house. I take the liberty to insert his lordship's answer, as I am eager to embrace every occasion of augmenting the respectable notion which should ever be entertained of my illustrious friend:—

LETTER 387. FROM LORD THURLOW.

"London, Oct. 24. 1780

"SIR, — I have this moment received your letter dated the 19th, and returned from Bath. In the beginning of the summer I placed one in the Chartreux, without the sanction of a recommendation so distinct and so authoritative as yours of Macbean; and I am afraid, that according to the establishment of the house, the opportunity of making the charity so good amends will not soon recur. But whenever a vacancy shall happen, if you'll favour me with notice of it, I will try to recommend him to the place, even though it should not be my turn to nominate. I am, Sir, with great regard, your most faithful and obedient servant,

"THURLOW."

Mr. Macbean was however, on Lord Thurlow's

nomination, admitted into the Chartreux in April 1781; on which occasion Dr. Johnson, with that benevolence by which he was uniformly actuated, wrote the following letter, which, for the sake of connexion, may properly be introduced here:

LETTER 388. TO THE REV. DR. VYSE,

At Lambeth.

"Bolt Court, April 10. 1781.

"REV. SIR, — The bearer is one of my old friends, a man of great learning, whom the chancellor has been pleased to nominate to the Chartreux. He attends his grace the archbishop, to take the oath required; and being a modest scholar, will escape embarrassment, if you are so kind as to introduce him, by which you will do a kindness to a man of great merit, and add another to those favours which have already been conferred by you on, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 389. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Oct. 17. 1780.

"DEAR SIR, — I am sorry to write you a letter that will not please you, and yet it is at last what I resolve to do. This year must pass without an interview; the summer has been foolishly lost, like many other of my summers and winters. I hardly saw a green field, but staid in town to work, without working much.

"Mr. Thrale's loss of health has lost him the election (1); he is now going to Brighthelmstone, and ex-

(1) "Mrs. Thrale felt this very acutely. When, after Mr. Thrale's death, a friend of Mr. Henry Thornton, then a candidate for Southwark, canvassed Mrs. Thrale for her interest, she replied, "I wish your friend success, and think he will have it; —he may probably come in for two parliaments; but if he tries for a third, were he an angel from heaven, the people of Southwark would cry, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.'" — *Miss Hawkins's Mem.* vol. i. p. 66. — C.

pects me to go with him; and how long I shall stay, I cannot tell. I do not much like the place, but yet I shall go and stay while my stay is desired. We must, therefore, content ourselves with knowing what we know as well as man can know the mind of man, that we love one another, and that we wish each other's happiness, and that the lapse of a year cannot lessen our mutual kindness.

"I was pleased to be told that I accused Mrs. Boswell unjustly, in supposing that she bears me ill-will. I love you so much, that I would be glad to love all that love you, and that you love; and I have love very ready for Mrs. Boswell, if she thinks it worthy of acceptance. I hope all the young ladies and gentlemen are well.

"I take a great liking to your brother. He tells me that his father received him kindly, but not fondly: however, you seem to have lived well enough at Auchinleck, while you staid. Make your father as happy as you can.

"You lately told me of your health: I can tell you in return, that my health has been for more than a year past better than it has been for many years before. Perhaps it may please God to give us some time together before we are parted. I am, dear Sir, yours, most affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 390. TO THE REV. DR. VYSE.

"Dec. 30. 1780.

"SIR, — I hope you will forgive the liberty I take, in soliciting your interposition with his grace the archbishop: my first petition was successful, and I therefore venture on a second.

"The matron of the Chartreux is about to resign her place; and Mrs. Desmoulins, a daughter of the late

Dr. Swinfen who was well known to your father, is desirous of succeeding her. She has been accustomed by keeping a boarding-school to the care of children, and I think is very likely to discharge her duty. She is in great distress, and therefore may probably receive the benefit of a charitable foundation. If you wish to see her, she will be willing to give an account of herself.

"If you shall be pleased, Sir, to mention her favourably to his grace, you will do a great act of kindness to, Sir, yours, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

Being disappointed in my hopes of meeting Johnson this year, so that I could hear none of his admirable sayings, I shall compensate for this want by inserting a collection of them, for which I am indebted to my worthy friend Mr. Langton, whose kind communications have been separately interwoven in many parts of this work. Very few articles of this collection were committed to writing by himself, he not having that habit; which he regrets, and which those who know the numerous opportunities he had of gathering the rich fruits of *Johnsonian* wit and wisdom, must ever regret. I however found, in conversation with him, that a good store of JOHNSONIANA was treasured in his mind; and I compared it to Herculaneum, or some old Roman field, which, when dug, fully rewards the labourer employed. The authenticity of every article is unquestionable. For the expressions, I, who wrote them down in his presence, am partly answerable.

"Theocritus is not deserving of very high respect as

a writer; as to the pastoral part, Virgil is very evidently superior. He wrote, when there had been a larger influx of knowledge into the world than when Theocritus lived. Theocritus does not abound in description, though living in a beautiful country: the manners painted are coarse and gross. Virgil has much more description, more sentiment, more of nature, and more of art. Some of the most excellent parts of Theocritus are, where Castor and Pollux, going with the other Argonauts, land on the Bebrycian coast, and there fall into a dispute with Amycus, the king of that country; which is as well conducted as Euripides could have done it; and the battle is well related. Afterwards they carry off a woman, whose two brothers come to recover her, and expostulate with Castor and Pollux on their injustice; but they pay no regard to the brothers, and a battle ensues, where Castor and his brother are triumphant. Theocritus seems not to have seen that the brothers have their advantage in their argument over his Argonaut heroes. 'The Sicilian Gossips' is a piece of merit.

"Callimachus is a writer of little excellence. The chief thing to be learned from him is his account of Rites and Mythology; which, though desirable to be known for the sake of understanding other parts of ancient authors, is the least pleasing or valuable part of their writings.

"Maittaire's account of the Stephani is a heavy book. He seems to have been a puzzle-headed man, with a large share of scholarship; but with little geometry or logic in his head, without method, and possessed of little genius. He wrote Latin verses from time to time, and published a set in his old age, which he called '*Senilia*;' in which he shows so little learning or taste in writing, as to make *Carteret* a dactyl. In matters of genealogy it is necessary to give the bare names as they are; but in poetry, and in prose of any elegance in the writing, they require to have inflection given to

them. His book of the Dialects is a sad heap of confusion; the only way to write on them is to tabulate them with notes, added at the bottom of the page, and references.

"It may be questioned, whether there is not some mistake as to the methods of employing the poor, seemingly on a supposition that there is a certain portion of work left undone for want of persons to do it; but if that is otherwise, and all the materials we have are actually worked up, or all the manufactures we can use or dispose of are already executed, then what is given to the poor, who are to be set at work, must be taken from some who now have it: as time must be taken for learning (according to Sir William Petty's observation), a certain part of those very materials that, as it is, are properly worked up, must be spoiled by the unskilfulness of novices. We may apply to well-meaning, but misjudging persons in particulars of this nature, what Giannone said to a monk, who wanted what he called to *convert* him: '*Tu sei santo, ma tu non sei filosopho.*' It is an unhappy circumstance that one might give away five hundred pounds a year to those that importune in the streets, and not do any good.

"There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity than *condescension*, when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for his company.

"Having asked Mr. Langton if his father and mother had sat for their pictures, which he thought it right for each generation of a family to do, and being told they had opposed it, he said, 'Sir, among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture.'

"John Gilbert Cooper related, that soon after the publication of his Dictionary, Garrick being asked by Johnson what people said of it, told him, that among other animadversions, it was objected that he cited authorities which were beneath the dignity of such a

work, and mentioned Richardson. 'Nay,' said Johnson, 'I have done worse than that: I have cited *thee*, David.'

"Talking of expense, he observed, with what munificence a great merchant will spend his money, both from his having it at command, and from his enlarged views by calculation of a good effect upon the whole. 'Whereas,' said he, 'you will hardly ever find a country gentleman, who is not a good deal disconcerted at an unexpected occasion for his being obliged to lay out ten pounds.'

"When in good humour, he would talk of his own writings with a wonderful frankness and candour, and would even criticise them with the closest severity. One day, having read over one of his Ramblers, Mr. Langton asked him, how he liked that paper; he shook his head, and answered, 'too wordy.' At another time, when one was reading his tragedy of 'Irene,' to a company at a house in the country, he left the room; and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, 'Sir, I thought it had been better.'

"Talking of a point of delicate scrupulosity of moral conduct, he said to Mr. Langton, 'Men of harder minds than ours will do many things from which you and I would shrink; yet, Sir, they will, perhaps, do more good in life than we. But let us try to help one another. If there be a wrong twist, it may be set right. It is not probable that two people can be wrong the same way.'

"Of the preface to Capel's Shakspeare, he said, 'If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to "endow his purposes with words;" for as it is, he doth "gabble monstrously."' (1)

"He related that he had once in a dream a contest

(1) "When thou wouldst gabble like a thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes with words."—*Tempest*, act i. sc. 2 —C

of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him.' 'Now,' said he, 'one may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection; for had not my judgment failed me, I should have seen, that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me, as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character.'

"One evening in company, an ingenious and learned gentleman read to him a letter of compliment which he had received from one of the professors of a foreign university. Johnson, in an irritable fit, thinking there was too much ostentation, said, 'I never receive any of these tributes of applause from abroad. One instance I recollect of a foreign publication, in which mention is made of *l'illustre Lockman* (1).'

"Of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he said, 'Sir, I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds.'

"He repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, in the Greek, our Saviour's gracious expression concerning the forgiveness of Mary Magdalene (2), 'Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε· πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην. 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.' (Luke, vii. 50.) (2) He said, 'The manner of this dismission is exceedingly affecting.'

"He thus defined the difference between physical and moral truth: 'Physical truth is, when you tell a thing as it actually is. Moral truth is, when you tell a

(1) Secretary to the British Herring Fishery, remarkable for an extraordinary number of occasional verses, not of eminent merit. — B. — He was an indefatigable translator for the booksellers, "having acquired a knowledge of the languages, as Dr. Johnson told Sir J. Hawkins, by living at coffee-houses frequented by foreigners." — C.

(2) It does not appear that the woman forgiven was Mary Magdalene. — [illegible]

thing sincerely and precisely as it appears to you. I say such a one walked across the street; if he really did so, I told a physical truth. If I thought so, though I should have been mistaken, I told a moral truth. (1)

"Huggins, the translator of Ariosto, and Mr. Thomas Warton, in the early part of his literary life, had a dispute concerning that poet, of whom Mr. Warton, in his 'Observations on Spenser's Fairy Queen,' gave some account which Huggins attempted to answer with violence, and said, 'I will *militate* no longer against his *nescience*.' Huggins was master of the subject, but wanted expression. Mr. Warton's knowledge of it was then imperfect, but his manner lively and elegant. Johnson said, 'It appears to me, that Huggins has ball without powder, and Warton powder without ball.'

"Talking of the farce of 'High Life below Stairs,' he said, 'Here is a farce which is really very diverting when you see it acted, and yet one may read it and not know that one has been reading any thing at all.'

"He used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury-lane theatre, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comic powers, and conversed more with her, than with any of them. He said, 'Clive, Sir, is a good thing to sit by; she always understands what you say.' And she said of him, 'I love to sit by Dr. Johnson; he always entertains me.' One night, when 'The Recruiting Officer' was acted, he said to Mr. Holland, who had been expressing an apprehension that Dr. Johnson would disdain the works of Farquhar, 'No, Sir, I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit.'

(1) This account of the difference between moral and physical truth is in Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," and many other books.—Kearney.

occasion to say, 'That young gentleman seems to have little to do.' Mr. Beauclerk observed, 'Then, to be sure, Spence turned round and wrote that down;' and went on to say to Dr. Johnson, 'Pope, Sir, would have said the same of you, if he had seen you distilling.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, if Pope had told me of my distilling, I would have told him of his grotto.' (1)

"He would allow no settled indulgence of idleness upon principle, and always repelled every attempt to urge excuses for it. A friend one day suggested, that it was not wholesome to study soon after dinner. JOHNSON. 'Ah, Sir, don't give way to such a fancy. At one time of my life I had taken it into my head that it was not wholesome to study between breakfast and dinner.'

"Mr. Beauclerk one day repeated to Dr. Johnson Pope's lines,

> 'Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
> Ten metropolitans in preaching well;'

then asked the doctor, 'Why did Pope say this?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, he hoped it would vex somebody.' (2)

(1) This would have been a very inadequate retort, for Johnson's chemistry was a mere pastime, while Pope's grotto was, although ornamented, a useful, and even necessary work. Johnson has explained his views of this point very copiously in his Life of Pope: where he says, "that being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, Pope adorned it with fossil bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto — a place of silence and retreat from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that care and passions could be excluded. A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than to exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden; and as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage." — C.

(2) Dr. James Foster was an eminent preacher among the dissenters; and Pope professes to prefer his merit in so humble a station to the more splendid ministry of the *metropolitans*. Pope's object certainly was to vex the clergy; but Mr. Beau-

"Dr. Goldsmith, upon occasion of Mrs. Lennox's bringing out a play (1), said to Dr. Johnson at the club, that a person had advised him to go and hiss it, because she had attacked Shakspeare in her book called "Shakspeare Illustrated.' JOHNSON. 'And did not you tell him that he was a rascal?' GOLDSMITH. 'No, Sir, I did not. Perhaps he might not mean what he said.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, if he lied, it is a different thing.' Colman slily said (but it is believed Dr. Johnson did not hear him), 'Then the proper expression should have been, — Sir, if you don't lie, you're a rascal.'

"His affection for Topham Beauclerk was so great, that when Beauclerk was labouring under that severe illness which at last occasioned his death, Johnson said (with a voice faltering with emotion), 'Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk.'

"One night at the club he produced a translation of an epitaph which Lord Elibank had written in English for his lady, and requested of Johnson to turn it into Latin for him. Having read *Domina de North et Gray* (2), he said to Dyer, 'You see, Sir, what barbarisms we are compelled to make use of, when modern titles are to be specifically mentioned in Latin inscriptions.' When he had read it once aloud, and there had been a general approbation expressed by the company,

clerk probably meant to ask — what is by no means so clear — how these two lines bear on the general design and argument. — C.

(1) Probably "The Sisters," a comedy performed one night only, at Covent Garden, in 1769. Dr. Goldsmith wrote an excellent epilogue to it. — M.

(2) Lord Elibank married a Dutch lady, Maria Margaret de Yonge, the widow of Lord North and Gray. Mr. Langton mistook the phrase, which is, in the epitaph, applied to the husband, *Domino North et Gray*, and not to the lady, *Domina de North et Gray*. — C.

he addressed himself to Mr. Dyer in particular, and said, 'Sir, I beg to have your judgment, for I know your nicety.' Dyer then very properly desired to read it over again; which having done, he pointed out an incongruity in one of the sentences. Johnson immediately assented to the observation, and said, 'Sir, this is owing to an alteration of a part of the sentence from the form in which I had first written it; and I believe, Sir, you may have remarked, that the making a partial change, without a due regard to the general structure of the sentence, is a very frequent cause of error in composition.'

"Johnson was well acquainted with Mr. Dossie, author of a Treatise on Agriculture (1); and said of him, 'Sir, of the objects which the Society of Arts have chiefly in view, the chymical effects of bodies operating upon other bodies, he knows more than almost any man.' Johnson, in order to give Mr. Dossie his vote to be a member of this society, paid up an arrear which had run on for two years. On this occasion he mentioned a circumstance, as characteristic of the Scotch. 'One of that nation,' said he, 'who had been a candidate, against whom I had voted, came up to me with a civil salutation. Now, Sir, this is their way. An Englishman would have stomached it and been sulky, and never have taken further notice of you; but a Scotchman, Sir, though you vote nineteen times against him, will accost you with equal complaisance after each time, and the twentieth time, Sir, he will get your vote.'

"Talking on the subject of toleration, one day when some friends were with him in his study, he made his

(1) Dossie also published, in two vols. 8vo., what was then a very useful work, entitled "The Handmaid to the Arts," dedicated to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c. — Hall.

usual remark, that the state has a right to regulate the religion of the people, who are the children of the state. A clergyman having readily acquiesced in this, Johnson, who loved discussion, observed, 'But, Sir, you must go round to other states than our own. You do not know what a Bramin has to say for himself. (1) In short, Sir, I have got no further than this: every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test.'

"A man, he observed, should begin to write soon; for, if he waits till his judgment is matured, his inability, through want of practice to express his conceptions, will make the disproportion so great between what he sees, and what he can attain, that he will probably be discouraged from writing at all. As a proof of the justness of this remark, we may instance what is related of the great Lord Granville (2); that after he had written his letter giving an account of the battle of Dettingen, he said, 'Here is a letter, expressed in terms not good enough for a tallow-chandler to have used.'

"Talking of a court-martial that was sitting upon a very momentous public occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision; and said, that perhaps there was not a member of it, who, in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilities. (3)

(1) Here Lord Macartney remarks, "A Bramin, or any caste of the Hindoos, will neither admit you to be of their religion, nor be converted to yours: — a thing which struck the Portuguese with the greatest astonishment when they first discovered the East Indies."

(2) John, the first Earl Granville, who died January 2. 1763. — M.

(3) As Mr. Langton's anecdotes are not dated, it is not easy to determine what court-martial this was; probably — as Sir James Mackintosh suggests — Admiral Keppel's, in 1780. — C.

"Goldsmith one day brought to the club a printed ode, which he, with others, had been hearing read by its author in a public room, at the rate of five shillings each for admission. One of the company having read it aloud, Dr. Johnson said, 'Bolder words and more timorous meaning, I think, never were brought together.'

"Talking of Gray's Odes, he said, 'They are forced plants, raised in a hotbed; and they are poor plants: they are but cucumbers after all.' A gentleman present, who had been running down ode-writing in general, as a bad species of poetry, unluckily said, 'Had they been literally cucumbers, they had been better things than odes.' 'Yes, Sir,' said Johnson, '*for a hog*.'

"His distinction of the different degrees of attainment of learning was thus marked upon two occasions Of Queen Elizabeth he said, 'She had learning enough to have given dignity to a bishop;' and of Mr. Thomas Davies he said, 'Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman.'

"He used to quote, with great warmth, the saying of Aristotle recorded by Diogenes Laertius; that there was the same difference between one learned and unlearned, as between the living and the dead.

"It is very remarkable, that he retained in his memory very slight and trivial, as well as important, things. As an instance of this, it seems that an inferior domestic of the Duke of Leeds had attempted to celebrate his Grace's marriage in such homely rhymes as he could make; and this curious composition having been sung to Dr. Johnson, he got it by heart, and used to repeat it in a very pleasant manner. Two of the stanzas were these: —

'When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
To a fine young lady of high quality,
How happy will that gentlewoman be
In his Grace of Leeds's good company!

'She shall have all that's fine and fair,
And the best of silk and satin shall wear;
And ride in a coach to take the air,
And have a house in St. James's-square.'(1)

To hear a man of the weight and dignity of Johnson repeating such humble attempts at poetry had a very amusing effect. He, however, seriously observed of the last stanza repeated by him, that it nearly comprised all the advantages that wealth can give.

"An eminent foreigner, when he was shown the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd inquiries. 'Now there, Sir,' said he, 'is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows any thing of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing when he has nothing to say.'

"His unjust contempt for foreigners was, indeed, extreme. One evening at Old Slaughter's Coffee-house,

(1) The correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine who subscribes himself Sciolus furnishes the following supplement: "A lady of my acquaintance remembers to have heard her uncle sing those homely stanzas more than forty-five years ago. He repeated the second thus: —

"She shall breed young lords and ladies fair,
And ride abroad in a coach and three pair,
And the best, &c.
And have a house," &c.

And remembered a third, which seems to have been the introductory one, and is believed to have been the only remaining one: —

"When the Duke of Leeds shall have made his choice
Of a charming young lady that 's beautiful and wise,
She 'll be the happiest young gentlewoman under the skies,
As long as the sun and moon shall rise,
And how happy shall," &c.

It is with pleasure I add that this stanza could never be more truly applied than at this present time [1792]. — B. — The Duke and Duchess of Leeds, to whom Mr. Boswell alludes in the latter part of this note, were Francis the fifth duke, who died in 1799, and his second wife Catherine Anguish, who still survives. — C.

when a number of them were talking loud about little matters, he said, 'Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation, *For any thing I see, foreigners are fools?*'

"He said that once, when he had a violent toothach, a Frenchman accosted him thus: *Ah, monsieur, vous étudiez trop.*

"Having spent an evening at Mr. Langton's with the Reverend Dr. Parr, he was much pleased with the conversation of that learned gentleman; and, after he was gone, said to Mr. Langton, 'Sir, I am obliged to you for having asked me this evening. Parr is a fair man.(1) I do not know when I have had an occasion of such free controversy. It is remarkable how much of a man's life may pass without meeting with any instance of this kind of open discussion.'

"We may fairly institute a criticism between Shakspeare and Corneille, as they both had, though in a different degree, the lights of a latter age. It is not so just between the Greek dramatic writers and Shakspeare. It may be replied to what is said by one of the remarkers on Shakspeare, that though Darius's shade had *prescience*, it does not necessarily follow that he had all *past* particulars revealed to him.

"Spanish plays, being wildly and improbably farcical, would please children here, as children are entertained with stories full of prodigies; their experience not being sufficient to cause them to be so readily startled at deviations from the natural course of life. The machinery of the pagans is uninteresting to us: when a goddess appears in Homer or Virgil we grow weary; still more so in the Grecian tragedies, as in that kind of composition a nearer approach to nature is intended. Yet there are good reasons for reading romances; as

(1) When the corporation of Norwich applied to Johnson to point out to them a proper master for their grammar-school, he recommended Dr. Parr, on his ceasing to be usher to Sumner at Harrow. — BURNEY.

the fertility of invention, the beauty of style and expression, the curiosity of seeing with what kind of performances the age and country in which they were written was delighted: for it is to be apprehended, that at the time when very wild improbable tales were well received, the people were in a barbarous state, and so on the footing of children, as has been explained.

"It is evident enough that no one who writes now can use the pagan deities and mythology; the only machinery, therefore, seems that of ministering spirits, the ghosts of the departed, witches and fairies; though these latter, as the vulgar superstition concerning them (which, while in its force, infected at least the imagination of those that had more advantage in education, though their reason set them free from it) is every day wearing out, seem likely to be of little further assistance in the machinery of poetry. As I recollect, Hammond introduces a hag or witch into one of his love-elegies, where the effect is unmeaning and disgusting.(1)

"The man who uses his talent of ridicule in creating or grossly exaggerating the instances he gives, who imputes absurdities that did not happen, or when a man was a little ridiculous, describes him as having been very much so, abuses his talents greatly. The great use of delineating absurdities is, that we may know how far human folly can go: the account, therefore, ought of absolute necessity to be faithful. A certain character (naming the person), as to the general cast of it, is well described by Garrick; but a great deal of the phraseology he uses in it is quite his own, particularly in the proverbial comparisons, 'obstinate as a pig,' &c.: but I don't know whether it might not be true of Lord

(1) Not more so than the rest of the elegy (the fifth), which is certainly, in every point of view, the worst of all Hammond's productions. Johnson exposes the absurdity of modern mythology very forcibly in his Life of Hammond.—C

———(1), that from a too great eagerness of praise and popularity, and a politeness carried to a ridiculous excess, he was likely, after asserting a thing in general, to give it up again in parts. For instance, if he had said Reynolds was the first of painters, he was capable enough of giving up, as objections might happen to be severally made, first his outline, — then the grace in form, — then the colouring, — and lastly, to have owned that he was such a mannerist, that the disposition of his pictures was all alike.

"For hospitality, as formerly practised, there is no longer the same reason. Heretofore the poorer people were more numerous, and, from want of commerce, their means of getting a livelihood more difficult; therefore the supporting them was an act of great benevolence: now that the poor can find maintenance for themselves, and their labour is wanted, a general undiscerning hospitality tends to ill, by withdrawing them from their work to idleness and drunkenness. Then, formerly rents were received in kind, so that there was a great abundance of provisions in possession of the owners of the lands, which, since the plenty of money afforded by commerce, is no longer the case.

"Hospitality to strangers and foreigners in our country is now almost at an end; since, from the increase of them that come to us, there have been a sufficient number of people that have found an interest in providing inns and proper accommodations, which is in general a more expedient method for the entertainment of travellers. Where the travellers and strangers are few, more of that hospitality subsists, as it has not been worth while to provide places of accommodation. In Ireland, there is still hospitality to strangers in some degree; in Hungary and Poland, probably more.

"Colman, in a note on his translation of Terence,

(1) Perhaps Lord Corke. — C.

talking of Shakspeare's learning, asks, 'What says Farmer to this? What says Johnson?' Upon this he observed, 'Sir, let Farmer answer for himself: *I* never engaged in this controversy. I always said Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English.'

"A clergyman, whom he characterised as one who loved to say little oddities, was affecting one day, at a bishop's table, a sort of sliness and freedom not in character, and repeated, as if part of 'The Old Man Wish,' a song by Dr. Walter Pope, a verse bordering on licentiousness. Johnson rebuked him in the finest manner, by first showing him that he did not know the passage he was aiming at, and thus humbling him: 'Sir, that is not the song: it is thus.' And he gave it right. Then, looking stedfastly on him, 'Sir, there is a part of that song which I should wish to exemplify in my own life:—

"May I govern my passions with absolute sway!"'

"Being asked if Barnes knew a good deal of Greek, he answered, 'I doubt, Sir, he was *unoculus inter cœcos*.'(1)

"He used frequently to observe, that men might be very eminent in a profession, without our perceiving any particular power of mind in them in conversation. 'It seems strange,' said he, 'that a man should see so far to the right, who sees so short a way to the left. Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the

(1) Johnson, in his Life of Milton, after mentioning that great poet's extraordinary fancy, that the world was in its decay, and that his book was to be written in an age too late for heroic poesy, thus concludes: "However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity; he might still be a giant among the pigmies, *the one-eyed monarch of the blind*."—J. Boswell, Jun.

world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you.'

"A gentleman, by no means deficient in literature, having discovered less acquaintance with one of the classics than Johnson expected, when the gentleman left the room, he observed, 'You see, now, how little any body reads.' Mr. Langton happening to mention his having read a good deal in Clenardus's Greek Grammar(1), 'Why, Sir,' said he, 'who is there in this town who knows any thing of Clenardus but you and I?'(2) And upon Mr. Langton's mentioning that he had taken the pains to learn by heart the Epistle of St. Basil, which is given in that grammar as a praxis, 'Sir,' said he, 'I never made such an effort to attain Greek.'

"Of Dodsley's 'Public Virtue, a poem,' he said 'It was fine *blank*' (meaning to express his usual contempt for blank verse): however, this miserable poem did not sell, and my poor friend Doddy said Public Virtue was not a subject to interest the age.

"Mr. Langton, when a very young man, read Dodsley's 'Cleone, a Tragedy,' to him, not aware of his extreme impatience to be read to. As it went on, he turned his face to the back of his chair, and put himself into various attitudes, which marked his uneasiness. At the end of an act, however, he said, 'Come, let's have some more; let's go into the slaughter-house

(1) Nicholas Clenard, who was born in Brabant, and died at Grenada in 1542, was a great traveller and linguist. Beside his Greek Grammar (of which an improved edition was published by Vossius at Amsterdam in 1626), he wrote a Hebrew Grammar, and an account of his travels in various countries, in Latin (EPISTOLARUM LIBRI DUO, 8vo. 1556) — a very rare work, of which there is a copy in the Bodleian Library. His Latin (says the author of NOUVEAU DICTIONNAIRE HISTORIQUE, 1789) would have been more pure, if he had not known so many languages. — M.

(2) Mr. Langton, as has been already observed, was very studious of Greek literature. — C.

again, Lanky. But I am afraid there is more blood than brains.' Yet he afterwards said, 'When I heard you read it, I thought higher of its power of language; when I read it myself, I was more sensible of its pathetic effect;' and then he paid it a compliment which many will think very extravagant. 'Sir,' said he 'if Otway had written this play, no other of his pieces would have been remembered.' Dodsley himself, upon this being repeated to him, said, 'It was too much.' It must be remembered, that Johnson always appeared not to be sufficiently sensible of the merit of Otway. (1)

"'Snatches of reading,' said he, 'will not make a Bentley or a Clarke. They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous. I would put a child into a library (where no unfit books are), and let him read at his choice. A child should not be discouraged from reading any thing that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above his reach. If that be the case, the child will soon find it out and desist; if not, he of course gains the instruction; which is so much the more likely to come, from the inclination with which he takes up the study.'

"Though he used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned, that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them.

"A gentleman, who introduced his brother to Dr. Johnson was earnest to recommend him to the doctor's notice, which he did by saying, 'When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I can wait.'

"When the rumour was strong that we should have a war, because the French would assist the Americans,

(1) This assertion concerning Johnson's insensibility to the pathetic powers of Otway is too *round*. I once asked him, whether he did not think Otway frequently tender; when he answered, "Sir, he is all tenderness."—BURNEY.

he rebuked a friend with some asperity for supposing it, saying, 'No, Sir, national faith is not yet sunk so low.'

"In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired, he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of 'Thomas à Kempis;' and, finding that there appeared no abatement of his power of acquisition, he then desisted, as thinking the experiment had been duly tried. Mr. Burke justly observed, that this was not the most vigorous trial, Low Dutch being a language so near to our own: had it been one of the languages entirely different, he might have been very soon satisfied.

"Mr. Langton and he having gone to see a freemason's funeral procession when they were at Rochester, and some solemn music being played on French-horns, he said, 'This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds;' adding, 'that the impression made upon him was of a melancholy kind.' Mr. Langton saying, that this effect was a fine one, — JOHNSON. 'Yes, if it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good; but inasmuch as it is melancholy *per se*, it is bad.'(1)

"Goldsmith had long a visionary project, that some time or other, when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo, in order to acquire a knowledge, as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked of in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, 'Of all men Gold-

(1) The French-horn, however, is so far from being melancholy *per se*, that when the strain is light, and in the field, there is nothing so cheerful! It was the funeral occasion, and probably the solemnity of the strain, that produced the plaintive effect here mentioned. — BURNEY.

smith is the most unfit to go out upon such an inquiry; for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement.'

"'Greek, Sir,' said he, 'is like lace; every man gets as much of it as he can.' (1)

"When Lord Charles Hay, after his return from America, was preparing his defence to be offered to the court-martial which he had demanded, having heard Mr. Langton as high in expressions of admiration of Johnson as he usually was, he requested that Dr. Johnson might be introduced to him; and Mr. Langton having mentioned it to Johnson, he very kindly and readily agreed; and, being presented by Mr. Langton to his lordship, while under arrest, he saw him several times; upon one of which occasions Lord Charles read to him what he had prepared, which Johnson signified his approbation of, saying, 'It is a very good soldierly defence.' Johnson said that he had advised his lordship, that as it was in vain to contend with those who were in possession of power, if they would offer him the rank of lieutenant-general, and a government, it would be better judged to desist from urging his complaints. It is well known that his lordship died before the sentence was made known.

"Johnson one day gave high praise to Dr. Bentley's verses in Dodsley's Collection, which he recited with his usual energy. Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed, in his decisive professorial manner, 'Very well, — very well.' Johnson, however, added, 'Yes,

(1) It should be remembered, that this was said twenty-five or thirty years ago, when lace was very generally worn. — M.

they *are* very well, Sir; but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses (1)

(1) Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Cowley, says, that these are "the only English verses which Bentley is known to have written." I shall here insert them, and hope my readers will apply them.

"Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,
And thence poetic laurels bring,
Must first acquire due force and skill,
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

"Who Nature's treasures would explore,
Her mysteries and arcana know,
Must high as lofty Newton soar,
Must stoop as delving Woodward low.

"Who studies ancient laws and rites,
Tongues, arts, and arms, and history,
Must drudge, like Seldon, days and nights,
And in the endless labour die.

"Who travels in religious jars,
(Truth mix'd with error, shades with rays,)
Like Whiston, wanting pyx or stars,
In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

"But grant our hero's hope long toil
And comprehensive genius crown,
All sciences, all arts his spoil,
Yet what reward, or what renown?

"Envy, innate in vulgar souls,
Envy steps in and stops his rise;
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
His lustre, and his worth decries.

"He lives inglorious or in want,
To college and old books confined;
Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant;
Dunces advanced, he's left behind:
Yet left content, a genuine stoic he,
Great without patron, rich without South Sea."— B.

A different, and probably a more accurate, copy of these spirited verses is to be found in "The Grove, or a Collection of Original Poems and Translations," &c. 1721. In this miscellany the last stanza, which in Dodsley's copy is unquestionably uncouth, is thus exhibited: —

"*Inglorious or by wants enthrall'd,*
To college and old books confined,
A pedant from his learning call'd,
Dunces advanced, he's left behind."— J. Boswell, Jun.

of a man of a strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.' (1)

"Drinking tea one day at Garrick's with Mr. Langton, he was questioned if he was not somewhat of a heretic as to Shakspeare. Said Garrick, 'I doubt he is a little of an infidel.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I will stand by the lines I have written on Shakspeare in my prologue at the opening of your theatre.' Mr. Langton suggested, that in the line, —

'And panting Time toil'd after him in vain,'

Johnson might have had in his eye the passage in the 'Tempest,' where Prospero says of Miranda, —

'——— She will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.'

Johnson said nothing. Garrick then ventured to observe, 'I do not think that the happiest line in the praise of Shakspeare.' Johnson exclaimed (smiling), 'Prosaical rogues! next time I write, I'll make both time and space pant.' (2)

(1) The difference between Johnson and Smith is apparent even in this slight instance. Smith was a man of extraordinary application, and had his mind crowded with all manner of subjects; but the force, acuteness, and vivacity of Johnson were not to be found there. He had book-making so much in his thoughts, and was so chary of what might be turned to account in that way, that he once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he made it a rule, when in company, never to talk of what he understood. Beauclerk had for a short time a pretty high opinion of Smith's conversation. Garrick, after listening to him for a while, as to one of whom his expectations had been raised, turned slily to a friend, and whispered him, "What say you to this? —eh? *Flabby*, I think."

(2) I am sorry to see in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," Vol. II. "An Essay on the Character of Hamlet," written, I should suppose, by a very young man, though called "Reverend," who speaks with presumptuous petulance of the first literary character of his age. Amidst a cloudy confusion of words (which hath of late too often passed

"It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames to accost each other as they passed in the most abusive language they could invent; generally, however, with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry in Number 383. of 'The Spectator,' when Sir Roger de Coverly and he are going to Spring-garden. (1) Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest. A fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered him thus, 'Sir, your wife, *under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house*, is a receiver of stolen goods.' One evening when he and Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were in company together, and the admirable scolding of Timon of Athens was mentioned, this instance of Johnson's was quoted, and thought to have at least equal excellence.

"As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr. Langton recollects having passed an evening with both of them, when Mr. Burke repeatedly entered upon topics which it was evident he would have illustrated with extensive

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in Scotland for *metaphysics*), he thus ventures to criticise one of the noblest lines in our language: — "Dr. Johnson has remarked, that 'Time toiled after him in vain.' But I should apprehend, that this is *entirely to mistake the character*. Time toils after *every great man*, as well as after Shakspeare. The *workings* of an ordinary mind *keep pace*, indeed, with time; they move no faster; *they have their beginning, their middle, and their end*; but superior natures can *reduce these into a point*. They do not, indeed, *suppress* them; but they *suspend*, or they *lock them up in the breast*." The learned society, under whose sanction such gabble is ushered into the world, would do well to offer a premium to any one who will discover its meaning.

(1) Vauxhall. — C.

knowledge and richness of expression; but Johnson always seized upon the conversation, in which, however, he acquitted himself in a most masterly manner. As Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were walking home, Mr. Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night: Mr. Langton joined in this, but added, he could have wished to hear more from another person (plainly intimating that he meant Mr. Burke). 'O, no,' said Mr. Burke, 'it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him.'

"Beauclerk having observed to him of one of their friends, that he was awkward at counting money; 'Why, Sir,' said Johnson, 'I am likewise awkward at counting money. But then, Sir, the reason is plain; I have had very little money to count.'

"He had an abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, of whom he said, 'Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman, such are his stores of literature, such his knowledge in divinity, and such his exemplary life;' he added, 'and, Sir, he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions: he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality.'

"Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind; when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, 'Pray, Sir, don't leave us; for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist.'

"Goldsmith, upon being visited by Johnson one day in the Temple, said to him with a little jealousy of the appearance of his accommodation, 'I shall soon be in better chambers than these.' Johnson at the same time checked him and paid him a handsome compliment, implying that a man of his talents should be

above attention to such distinctions, — 'Nay, Sir, never mind that: *Nil te quæsiveris extra.*'

"At the time when his pension was granted to him, he said, with a noble literary ambition, 'Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did.'

"As an instance of the niceness of his taste, though he praised West's translation of Pindar, he pointed out the following passages as faulty, by expressing a circumstance so minute as to detract from the general dignity which should prevail: —

'Down then from thy glittering *nail*,
Take, O Muse, thy Dorian lyre.'

"When Mr. Vesey(1) was proposed as a member of the Literary Club, Mr. Burke began by saying that he was a man of gentle manners. 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners, you have said enough.'

"The late Mr. Fitzherbert told Mr. Langton that Johnson said to him, 'Sir, a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing, than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down.'

"'My dear friend, Dr. Bathurst,' said he, with a warmth of approbation, 'declared he was glad that his father, who was a West India planter, had left his affairs in total ruin, because, having no estate, he was not under the temptation of having slaves.'

"Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson, when he carried Mr. Langton to see him, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression, 'Sir, I can

(1) The Right Hon. Agmondesham Vesey was elected a member of the Literary Club in 1773, and died August 11th, 1786. — M.

make him *roar*.' But he failed; for in that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his Clarissa into German.

"Once when somebody produced a newspaper in which there was a letter of stupid abuse of Sir Joshua Reynolds, of which Johnson himself came in for a share, 'Pray,' said he, 'let us have it read aloud from beginning to end; which being done, he, with a ludicrous earnestness, and not directing his look to any particular person, called out, 'Are we alive after all this satire?'

"He had a strong prejudice against the political character of Secker, one instance of which appeared at Oxford, where he expressed great dissatisfaction at his varying the old-established toast, 'Church and king.' 'The Archbishop of Canterbury,' said he, with an affected, smooth, smiling grimace, 'drinks, 'Constitution in church and state.'' Being asked what difference there was between the two toasts, he said, 'Why, Sir, you may be sure he meant something.' Yet when the life of that prelate, prefixed to his sermons by Dr. Porteus and Dr. Stinton, his chaplains, first came out, he read it with the utmost avidity, and said, 'It is a life well written, and that well deserves to be recorded.'

"Of a certain noble lord (1), he said, 'Respect him you could not; for he had no mind of his own. Love him you could not; for that which you could do with him every one else could.'

"Of Dr. Goldsmith he said, 'No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.'

"He told, in his lively manner, the following literary anecdote: — 'Green and Guthrie, an Irishman and a

(1) See *antè*, p. 365., an allusion to probably the same civil lord. — C.

Scotchman, undertook a translation of Duhalde's History of China. Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French; and these two undertook to translate Duhalde's History of China. In this translation there was found, 'the twenty-sixth day of the new moon.' Now, as the whole age of the moon is but twenty-eight days, the moon, instead of being new, was nearly as old as it could be. The blunder arose from their mistaking the word *neuvième*, ninth, for *nouvelle*, or *neuve*, new.'

"Talking of Dr. Blagden's (1) copiousness and precision of communication, Dr. Johnson said, 'Blagden, Sir, is a delightful fellow.'

"On occasion of Dr. Johnson's publishing his pamphlet of 'The False Alarm,' there came out a very angry answer (by many supposed to be by Mr. Wilkes). Dr. Johnson determined on not answering it; but, in conversation with Mr. Langton, mentioned a particular or two, which, if he *had* replied to it, he might perhaps have inserted. In the answerer's pamphlet, it had been said with solemnity, 'Do you consider, Sir, that a house of commons is to the people as a creature is to its Creator?' 'To this question,' said Dr. Johnson, 'I could have replied, that, in the first place, the idea of a Creator must be such as that he has a power to unmake or annihilate his creature. Then it cannot be conceived that a creature can make laws for its Creator.' (2)

(1) Afterwards Sir Charles Blagden. Hannah More's account of him is, "'Doctor Blagden is Secretary to the Royal Society, so modest, so sensible, and so knowing, that he exemplifies Pope's line, "Willing to teach, and yet not proud to know."' — *Life*, Vol. II. p. 98. — C.

(2) His profound adoration of the Great First Cause was such as to set him above that "philosophy and vain deceit" with which men of narrow conceptions have been infected. I have heard him strongly maintain that "what is right is not so from any natural fitness, but because God wills it to be right;"

"'Depend upon it,' said he, 'that if a man *talks of* his misfortunes, there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him; for where there is nothing but pure misery, there never is any recourse to the mention of it.'

"'A man must be a poor beast, that should *read* no more in quantity than he could *utter* aloud.'

"'Imlac, in Rasselas,' I spelt with a *c* at the end, because it is less like English, which should always have the Saxon *k* added to the *c*.' (1)

"'Many a man is mad in certain instances, and goes through life without having it perceived. For example, a madness has seized a person (2), of supposing himself obliged literally to pray continually: had the madness turned the opposite way, and the person thought it a crime ever to pray, it might not improbably have continued unobserved.'

"He apprehended that the delineation of *characters* in the end of the first book of the 'Retreat of the Ten Thousand' was the first instance of the kind that was known.

"'Supposing,' said he, 'a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome: for instance, if a woman should continually dwell upon the subject of the Arian heresy.'

"'No man speaks concerning another, even suppose it to be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear

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and it is certainly so, because he has predisposed the relations of things so, as that which he wills must be right.

(1) I hope the authority of the great master of our language will stop that curtailing innovation by which we see *critic*, *public*, &c. frequently written instead of *critick*, *publick*, &c. — B. — Why should we not retrench an obvious superfluity? In the preceding age, *public* and *critic* were written *publique* and *critique*. Johnson himself, in a memorandum among Mr. Anderdon's papers, dated in 1784, writes "*cubic* feet." — C.

(2) Johnson had, no doubt, his poor friend Smart in his recollection: see *ante*, Vol. II. p. 170.

him, exactly as he would if he thought he was within hearing.'

"'The applause of a single human being is of great consequence.' This he said to me with great earnestness of manner, very near the time of his decease, on occasion of having desired me to read a letter addressed to him from some person in the north of England; which when I had done, and he asked me what the contents were, as I thought being particular upon it might fatigue him, it being of great length, I only told him in general that it was highly in his *praise*; and then he expressed himself as above.

"He mentioned with an air of satisfaction what Baretti had told him; that, meeting in the course of his studying English with an excellent paper in 'The Spectator,' one of four that were written by the respectable dissenting minister, Mr. Grove of Taunton, and observing the genius and energy of mind that it exhibits, it greatly quickened his curiosity to visit our country; as he thought, if such were the lighter periodical essays of our authors, their productions on more weighty occasions must be wonderful indeed!

"He observed once, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, that a beggar in the street will more readily ask alms from a *man*, though there should be no marks of wealth in his appearance, than from even a well-dressed *woman* (1); which he accounted for from the great degree of carefulness as to money, that is to be found in women; saying farther upon it, that the opportunities in general that they possess of improving their condition are much fewer than men have; and adding, as he looked round the company, which consisted of men only, 'There is not one of us who does not think he might be richer, if he would use his endeavour.'

(1) Sterne is of a direct contrary opinion. See his "Sentimental Journey;" article, *The Mystery*.

"He thus characterised an ingenious writer of his acquaintance: 'Sir, he is an enthusiast by rule.'

"'*He may hold up that* SHIELD *against all his enemies*,' was an observation on Homer, in reference to his description of the shield of Achilles, made by Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife to his friend Mr. Fitzherbert of Derbyshire, and respected by Dr. Johnson as a very fine one. He had in general a very high opinion of that lady's understanding.

"An observation of Bathurst's may be mentioned, which Johnson repeated, appearing to acknowledge it to be well founded; namely, it was somewhat remarkable how seldom, on occasion of coming into the company of any new person, one felt any wish or inclination to see him again."

This year the Reverend Dr. Franklin having published a translation of "Lucian," inscribed to him the *Demonax* thus: —

"To Dr. Samuel Johnson, the Demonax of the present age, this piece is inscribed by a sincere admirer of his respectable talents, THE TRANSLATOR."

Though upon a particular comparison of Demonax and Johnson, there does not seem to be a great deal of similarity between them (1), this dedication

(1) There were, no doubt, some points in which Johnson did not resemble Demonax, who was high-born and rich, very mild in his manners, gentle in argument and even in his reprimands, and lived to a great age in uninterrupted health; but in many other particulars Lucian's character seems very curiously applicable to Johnson; and indeed his tract resembles (in little) Boswell's

is a just compliment from the general character given by Lucian of the ancient sage, "αριϛον ων οιδα εγω φιλοσοφων γενομενον, the best philosopher whom I have ever seen or known."

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own work, being a collection of observations on several topics, moral, critical, and religious, made by a philosopher of strong sense, ready wit, and fearless veracity; and the character which Lucian ascribes to the conversation of Demonax appears to me very like (making due allowance for the difference of ancient and modern habits and topics) the style of that of Dr. Johnson. —C.

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.